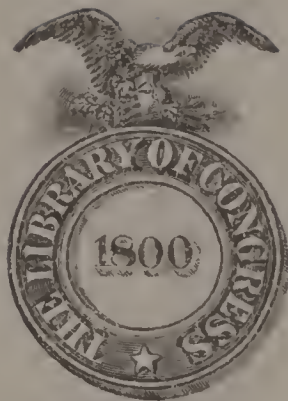


A WARNING TO WIVES

by

HESTER E. HOSFORD



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A WARNING TO WIVES



MAXINE MARLING

A WARNING TO WIVES

by
HESTER E. HOSFORD



1924

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DEDICATED TO
MY MOTHER

Note

The reader will note that Mount Olympic is symbolical of one of the largest, most representative Cities of the Great Northwest.

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CHAPTER I

Introducing the Richard Radcliffes

“DINNER is now being served! Dining car forward!” shouted the dusky despot, as he passed through the Pullman car Montevideo, attached to an express train, which had just left Washington, D. C., for Chicago, on a late afternoon in June, 1902.

“Shall we go to dinner now?” queried Richard Radcliffe, addressing his pretty, young wife, who readily assented by rising and going with her husband through the Pullman to the dining-car.

As the couple took their seats at the table, there was a broad smile on the good-natured face of the black man, who came to take their order for dinner, when he observed on the back of the young man’s collar a little confetti, which had evidently very recently adhered thereto.

As the beaming son of Africa handed the menu card to the young woman, she remarked:

“I believe I will have lamb chops. Let’s see, you don’t like lamb chops, do you? I had forgotten for the moment that you did not care for them. Well, I believe I will have them anyway.”

The tone of uncertainty in the young wife’s question only served to confirm the waiter’s well-grounded suspicions,—for as a matter of fact, Richard Radcliffe and Eleanor Fairchild Radcliffe had been married that very afternoon,

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at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Livingston Fairchild in Hampshire Avenue, Washington, D. C.

At the very time when young Radcliffe and his bride, were speeding along in the fast train, enjoying their meal in the dining car, the bride's mother was presiding over her own dinner table, remarking to her husband, who sat opposite to her:

“Well, they are married and gone!”

And as she did so, Elizabeth Fairchild breathed a sigh of regret, mingled with semi-satisfaction; for what mother, who has four marriageable daughters, and who is honest with herself, can claim immunity from an over-powering sense of gratification, when one of them leads off successfully in the matrimonial procession?

Livingston Fairchild ate slowly and deliberated much, before commenting on his wife's remark. Then he said:

“Marriage is a mighty serious business. An innocent young girl reposes all her trust in the one man in the world whom she idealizes. She commends her whole future into the keeping of the man whom she regards as the worthiest of all men. When she is young and fair, she relies upon her youth and beauty to sustain the interest and affection of her mate. Danger often lurks about when a young bride neglects to develop the mental resources within herself and depends too much upon her mere physical charms for the perpetuation of the great epoch of romance in her life.

“Some one, I believe it was Ruskin, said: ‘True marriage, when it is marriage at all,—is only the seal which marks the vowed transition of temporary into untiring service and of fitful into eternal love.’

“Few young people have the vision to comprehend the fullness of responsibility involved in marriage. Most of

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them are so full of the spontaneity and energy of youth that they expect too much at the beginning. They do not nurture the flower of romance with the delicacy which it requires in order to yield a full bloom. One fails to understand the sensitiveness of the other and the result is disaster.

“Eleanor, for instance, is a very sensitive girl, and if I am not greatly mistaken, Richard is equally sensitive, in his way. He has much feeling coupled with his tremendous energy. If he were differently constituted, he could not have achieved so great a degree of success so early in life. I entertain no fears, however, as to his business and professional future. He is a mighty level-headed young man,” said Livingston Fairchild, in emphatic tones.

And there could be no denying by those who knew young Radcliffe that his conservative, forceful father-in-law had spoken the truth; for, as Richard Radcliffe departed from Washington he was leaving behind him an excellent record as a successful young attorney, who had practised law for the past three years in the Capital city.

Young Radcliffe had received the degree of Bachelor of Laws just three years before from the University of Indiana, in his native state.

During his entire professional career, he had been the junior partner in his older brother's office, but toward the termination of the third year, Richard had decided that he would strike out for himself.

He believed that his future would be best assured by locating in one of the largest, most rapidly growing cities on the Pacific Coast. He knew that he had not yet struck his stride in his profession and felt sure that he never would if he continued in his brother's firm, where the burden of the office fell upon him, while his older brother was making a

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legal reputation and handsome income, relying for much of his success upon the hard work and personal popularity of Richard Radcliffe.

The latter was known to those of the legal fraternity as an able young trial lawyer, while his older brother's judicial temperament expressed itself in his analytical and academic ability, which had won for him an enviable prestige for a man of thirty-five.

Richard, who was eight years younger than his brother, won the confidence of his clients, from the moment that he began to prepare a case. He used the same kind of skill in such proceedings as a clever playwright employs when he creates a dramatic situation and develops his plan or plot, by introducing the right character at exactly the right time, — with the proper lines and a perfect psychological grasp of the immediate circumstance.

Richard Radcliffe would arrange to call his witnesses in a case in such order that the testimony of the second witness would not only strengthen that of the first, wherever possible, but would prepare the way for the third and fourth, and so on, — to build up a connected and logical story of evidence so well put together that it required the most accurate legal knowledge and subtle art in professional practice to refute or break down the testimony as established. Since the desirable acquirements of technical, legal skill and the power of convincing argument are so seldom found to be combined, to any great degree, in any one practitioner at the bar, the young attorney who is so fortunate as to find himself equipped with both these extraordinary qualifications, soon excels his competitor lawyers in the race for outstanding success.

And so it happened when Richard Radcliffe in his first

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case in Washington, D. C., took it upon himself to break the will of an extremely eccentric but wealthy old man, who had left his deserving widow poorly provided for, — he won his case, because he built up a sequence in the testimony of his client's witnesses, which proved to the court conclusively the erratic tendencies and unbecoming conduct of the deceased husband, climaxed by his inexcusable treatment of his devoted wife.

Such continuity of purpose, as applied to other cases, had won for young Radcliffe a certain unique distinction, which justified him in assuming, thus early in his professional experience, that he could practise law successfully without a partner. If, in later years, he decided to form a partnership, he would be in a position to act as the senior member himself and to select a suitable aspiring junior partner.

For the present he would launch out for himself, — and he would take Eleanor with him to the far west.

She had been ready and willing to go ever since she had been able to read in Richard's kindly deep blue eyes, the language of protector and defender, — as well as the assurance of his undivided and whole-hearted affection.

Eleanor Fairchild had always felt a sense of security in Richard's friendship, even before they were avowed lovers. He had inspired her confidence just as he had won the abiding faith and loyalty of his clients.

And now that they were married and Eleanor leaned her slender form on the strong right arm of Richard Radcliffe's tall, manly figure, and kissed his smooth shaven, florid cheek, as they were about to leave the Fairchild home that afternoon, she had no desire to take a round trip ticket with her on her transcontinental journey; — not even later in the day when the dining car waiter tipped off some of the

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other passengers to the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Richard Radcliffe were bride and groom. This incident resulted in considerable embarrassment for both Eleanor and Richard; — especially Eleanor, who was very self-conscious.

Her pretty, dimpled face had been covered with blushes, when she observed that two travelling salesmen in the dining car were looking at her with fixed gaze, and exchanging remarks which seemed to afford them much amusement.

Eleanor was so obviously annoyed at this occurrence that Richard did not finish his dessert and the pair made their way to the back platform of the train, only to find that the word had already been passed along ahead of them to the passengers in the observation car. As soon as Richard detected the true situation, he led the way, and the couple retired to their drawing-room.

The confidence of Eleanor Fairchild and her exacting parents had been well placed, when she accepted young Radcliffe's proposal, with both her father's and mother's consent; — for Richard was as high-minded as he had been successful.

“You know, Livingston, you always did like to theorize and philosophize on marriage. You always revel in flowery discourses on the subject of matrimony. I think that Eleanor and Richard will get along all right,” Elizabeth Fairchild had said to her husband, when he had concluded his extemporaneous dissertation on the seriousness of marriage and its problems.

Eleanor Fairchild, the present Mrs. Richard Radcliffe, came of a family whose conduct was governed by precision, regularity and method in all things. They ate their breakfast at seven A. M., week days and nine A. M., Sundays, without varying as much as three minutes from the established

Introducing the Richard Radcliffes

routine, in more than twenty years. They dined promptly at six thirty in the evening for the same number of years. All the members of the Fairchild family had been brought up according to schedule. Their records for punctuality, in all their activities, could not have been beaten by the Empire State Express or the Twentieth Century Limited.

The Fairchilds were earnest students of their traditions, too, but unlike many others of their kind, who boast of a long line of worthy ancestors, they tried to live up to their traditions and not on them. Before they moved from Philadelphia to Washington, D. C., they had always voted,—that is the men of the family had always voted the same ticket as had their grandfathers. They ate many of the dishes prepared, so far as possible, as their grandmothers had prepared them. Even the bureau drawers of their household were arranged in much the same manner as were those of their methodical and orderly grandparents.

Everywhere in the Fairchild home were evidences of system and painstaking regularity. While this all gave an impression of neatness and order, at the same time there was communicated to the atmosphere of the home a certain stilted uniformity, which detracted from the sense of freedom and spirit of naturalness which is always a part of all real homes.

For instance, there was no place where a man could put his feet, except on the floor, in the event that he wanted to rest himself leisurely and recliningly while he read the evening paper, — and as to smoking, this was permitted only on the back porch. There was no place where Howard or Frank or James Fairchild could stretch themselves unless they went upstairs to their rooms.

There was never an occasion at home when the boys

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could tell a story with the least flavor of unconventionality and then release their surplus energy in healthy, boyish laughter. There was never a time when the boys felt free to go to the butler's pantry or the refrigerator and help themselves to knick-knacks or sweet-meats.

Whenever amusement or entertainment was provided for the youngsters, it was according to form and formula. All stage performances, and the like, were passed upon by the senior members of the household, and a selected list prepared by them before the juniors were permitted the privilege of attending these places of diversion. Of course, every now and then, the juniors broke away from these restrictions unbeknown to their parents, or the older members of the family.

The Fairchilds frowned upon the course adopted by their neighbors, the Stimsons, who apparently gave their children a freedom of choice in the selection of their amusements by discussing with them the different kinds of plays and consciously directing the juniors to choose the best of their own free wills. It was the same way with music and reading matter. The Stimsons permitted their children to believe that they were choosing their own standards and forming their own tastes, when in reality the parents themselves were directing their children as pointedly as were the Fairchilds, but evidently, with much less effort and greater effect.

Eleanor Fairchild Radcliffe represented the highest type of feminine Fairchild. She was thoroughly Fairchild from the roots of her long, straight, black hair, to the tips of her elongated, sinewy, nervous fingers. She was a trim, neat, attractive girl,—good to look upon. She was petite, in fact, very slight of build, with regularity of features, and calm, gray, penetrating eyes, the expression of which would have indicated to a close observer, a degree of innate coldness.

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The only feature which had a tendency to mar her beauty was her nose;—this lineament of her face was slightly inclined to be Aquiline in form, and bespoke an inherited feature from the conventional Fairchilds, more clearly than any other of her facial characteristics.

And at twenty-two she had married Richard Radcliffe, and come out West with him, to the City of Mount Olympic, where her energetic and ambitious young husband had planned to engage upon his business and professional career.

“We’ll rent a modest house somewhere. If we like it, we’ll buy it later, or perhaps, build a house of our own.

“I still have left a thousand dollars in travellers’ cheques. I figure that this amount ought to furnish our house, without using any of the bank draft of two thousand dollars, which I brought along for deposit in a savings bank, and which will have to stand between us and starvation, until I can rustle around and get some clients,” suggested Richard to Eleanor, the first morning after their arrival in the Western city, where they were about to establish their home.

“Oh! I’m sure that a thousand dollars will be plenty for furnishing a very cozy dwelling. Just think of all the boxes and trunks of wedding presents which we have,” replied Eleanor.

CHAPTER II

Their Early Married Life

WHEN they began house-keeping, their little home, situated on one of the side hills of the city, was the essence of neatness. There were window boxes, with a border of gay tulips and sweet lavender. There were ferns and herbs that followed the line of the house wall. These surrounded the cottage, which was a white-washed, brick structure, with a curved roof line. The lawn was carefully green-swarded, with a freshness of verdure which indicated constant care.

The house was as attractive inside, in its furnishings and decorations, as it was in its floral surroundings, lawn and garden, on the outside.

The living-room was in Early American style. There was a table, a Duncan Phyffe model of mahogany. The davenport was upholstered in rich, brocaded, wistaria velvet. The frame was of birch, with a mahogany finish. There were some Vassar chairs in mulberry velour, and a few Stratford Windsor chairs, with saddle seats. On the tea-table was an English pottery set, ornamented with a design of field flowers and blackberries. There were two or three antique paintings, which Eleanor had brought from her old home. The window curtains were of heavy, peach colored silk, while the windows were framed in blue and mulberry toile de jouy. The draperies and curtains were Eleanor's own handi-

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work. The wistaria velvet rug harmonized with these decorations.

There was a small breakfast-room, combined with a sun-porch. The floor of this room was a fascinating checker-board of black and white blocks. The rug in front of the fire-place was a composition of squares of the same size as those of which the floor was made. There was a close association of design between the floor and the rug, which bespoke the Fairchild care and precision in the process of selection.

The dining-room was furnished in mahoganized birch. The wall panels were of the same kind of wood, which covered about two-thirds of the wall space. Above these panels was an artistic frieze, — an ornamental, deep band, which represented a forest of birch trees, interspersed by open spaces of landscape. The buffet and china closets were well filled with cut glass, silver, and hand-painted china-ware, — the most of which had been presented to Eleanor at the time of her wedding. She had brought West with her, the contents of her hope chest, which she had been preparing since her boarding-school days. Not content with its equipment, she continued to add to its store. Soon after she went to house-keeping, she had made a luncheon set, consisting of a dozen oblong place-mats and a table-runner on cream hand-woven linen, in a new and effective design of needle point and embroidery. She had bought some old jars and vases at a second-hand store. These she had transformed into lamp-stands and then made the shades of pieces of ancient tapestries, which had come down to her from the past. She had fitted out a cream crackle lamp, with a parchment shade, and she had made some other lamp shades of orchid colored,

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crepe, which she had placed over the electric light bulbs in the dining-room.

Eleanor had taught herself to apply paint materials so as to secure artistic, enamelled and stained effects on both hard and soft wood, with the result that the floors in the Radcliffe cottage bore an appearance which could not be distinguished from that of the floors in houses where the highest grade building materials had been used.

Altogether, Eleanor had made the interior of her bridal nest most artistic and attractive.

All her efforts greatly pleased Richard, who was an appreciative soul, with a big, warm heart, and an innate liking for all things beautiful. Indeed, he had indicated this clearly when he chose his wife. From day to day, it seemed to Richard that Eleanor became increasingly resourceful in her ability to create artistic touches here and there, which added to the attractiveness of their home.

When he arrived at their cottage in the evening, he was prone to observe all the little things which Eleanor had done to beautify their place of peace. Not only would he notice these things, but he would remark upon them with a keenness of appreciation which greatly pleased his pretty young bride.

“You have more artistic skill in transforming barren, unfurnished rooms into paradisiacal spots than anyone else whom I have ever known.

“I could not have believed before you started in, that you could make a house so attractive with so little outlay of money. You possess positive genius as a home builder.

“Some day I hope to have money enough to build just the kind of house which will do justice to your decorative talents. You ought to have a better back-ground, — a more

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elaborate setting for the exercise of your artistic ability," exclaimed Richard, as he arrived home one evening, and surveyed with satisfaction the last touches of Eleanor's handiwork in putting their house in order.

That afternoon she had actually made a buffet from the material contained in an old cabinet which she had purchased for a small sum in a second-hand store. On the front of the top cupboard she had painted some sketches, which resembled very closely the best Italian workmanship. She had devoted considerable time to painting during her boarding-school days and the short years following.

Eleanor really had a right to feel much pride in her artistic achievements. Her reproduction of an old Italian painted cabinet would have done credit to a much more experienced decorator. She had listened joyfully to Richard's praise, which always fell in dulcet tones upon her ears. When he spoke of a better house, she only said:

"I really don't know whether I shall ever want a larger house. This little place keeps me very busy. I find plenty to do to keep it neat and attractive," and with this remark, Eleanor went to an old trunk, which she had brought with her from home, and took from it a pair of antique, brass candle-sticks and a small, marble statuette of Minerva, which she placed on top of the buffet, with the Italian goddess of the handicrafts in the center,—with a candle-stick on each side.

"Well, here's to the goddess. May the candles shed enough light on her benign countenance so that she will reflect the greatest wisdom in presiding over this modest household," ejaculated Richard, as he took his seat at the dinner table.

Richard was already for a bouncing, big dinner. At this

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particular moment, he would have had more joy out of a nourishing roast of beef, with a few tempting side-dishes, climaxed by a little rich pastry, than anything else in the world.

But in his delectable, gastronomic desires, he was doomed to disappointment, because his artistic wife had devoted nearly all her time that day to the big buffet in the corner, with the result that she had prepared just a "picked up" supper of a few hashed brown potatoes, a little fried bacon, and some canned fruit.

Richard ate sparingly, partly from necessity, because of the inadequate quantity and lack of variety of food, and partly, because he did not altogether relish that which was placed before him, for his young wife had proven herself, from the beginning of their house-keeping days, a better artist than she was a cook.

In fact, the first dinner which she had served to Richard had been so badly spoiled, that she had made many apologies and then broken down in tears, while confessing to her much adored, young husband that the smell of food when cooking always had made her ill.

On that occasion, Richard had been in very good humor, —kind and tolerant, and had said:

"Never mind, I guess we shall be able to get enough to eat. We shall never be so foolish as to let a little matter like a spoiled dinner interfere with our happiness." Then he had taken Eleanor in his arms, caressed her fondly, soothed her troubled spirits, and dismissed the unpleasant incident with such good grace that it faded away as did the vaporous outpouring from the tea-kettle, when it was taken from the stove.

But this time, when the luke-warm, hashed brown

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potatoes came on, with the bacon not very well done, and the coffee too heavy, Richard was not in such cheerful spirits as he had been on the evening of their first home cooked dinner.

On this particular evening, Richard had come home, tired, hungry and depressed in spirits. They had been married about four months now. Richard was having an up-hill pull to secure clients and establish a practice. On this very day, a man on whom he had depended for a promised fee had disappointed him. He had worked under an unusually heavy strain for more than seven hours that day, preparing a brief for a case, which he was to try the following morning.

“Hard work bears hard on the average pulse;
Even with satisfactory results;
And when results are scarce, the heavy strain
Falls dead and solid on the heart and brain.”

Often when mortals are bothered, they seek blame-timber, and light on some one else that they may give vent to their feelings. Sometimes this some one else is partly to blame, and sometimes not. In this instance, Richard Radcliffe was making a good many reservations of mind; but he had himself too well in hand to explode, as would many men have done under the same provocation, even though they had had the same training, which belonged to one of Richard Radcliffe's birth and breeding.

Richard merely said:

“Tomorrow morning when I start for the office, I want you to put on your things and walk along a ways with me. I am going to see if I can't help you to do your marketing. There are some good stores, — grocery and meat markets on

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my way down, and I believe if we visit them together I can make you understand something about what a hungry man's appetite calls for.

"You see, I'm a strong, healthy man and I need NOURISHMENT!" laughingly exclaimed Richard, while he playfully patted Eleanor on the cheek, raised her dimpled chin, and kissed her devotedly.

"I know you are tired, after your tussle at carpenter work, — making that old buffet, but tomorrow, suppose you just get dinner and don't try to make our house look like a place belonging to really moneyed folks. After awhile we shall be able to buy all these things without trying to make imitations," consolingly remarked Richard.

Eleanor concealed the peevishness which she felt, replying: "All right. I'll go with you to market. You know that during all this time, you have never told me, exactly, what you like to eat and don't like. I do remember though, that you don't like lamb chops. Perhaps, if I can find out what it is that you want, I shall be able to get it for you."

When morning dawned there was a drenching rain. It promised to be one of those days of a steady down-pour, as every cloud in sight was so heavy that it seemed to be saturated beyond the point of containing any more water.

Richard protested, when Eleanor put on her rain-coat and arctics, and prepared to join him in the marketing expedition, which he had suggested the night before.

"You'll get soaking wet and there's no sense in it. You're likely to catch cold, too. You had a hard day yesterday and the chances are you're still a little tired from over-exertion. Take off your things and stay at home. We'll postpone this trip to the market until tomorrow morning," said Richard, very much as though he meant it.

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“No, I want to go this morning. I feel perfectly well. I had a refreshing night’s sleep. I feel as chipper as the poet who wrote about ‘The golden dew of slumber as it lulls one soothingly into rest, and then awakens one with fresh vigor.’ I shall not mind the rain in the least; so let’s be off,” insisted Eleanor.

“Well, if a woman wills, she will, I suppose,” exclaimed Richard, as he opened the door.

The rain was coming down in sheets and the wind beat fiercely against Richard’s umbrella, when he attempted to raise it.

“Holy Mackerel! This is too much,” ejaculated Richard. “If you still insist on going with me, I shall go back into the house and call a taxi.”

“No, I hear a street car coming now. We shall be able to get it in the next block if we hurry,” suggested Eleanor.

It was all that Richard could do to hold the umbrella with both hands, until they reached the corner. Two of the stays were badly bent when he closed it and helped Eleanor aboard the car, which started suddenly and threw them both forward, with a jolt which landed them in a seat already occupied by a fat man who was attempting to read the morning newspaper.

As soon as Richard could recover his balance, he took Eleanor by the arm, and the two were finally seated comfortably, as the cars in this section of town, so remote from the center of the city’s activities, were never crowded.

“I shall have to take my umbrella and have it re-covered. I see it is torn in two places. I am sorry about it, too, for it was presented to me by the members of my law-school fraternity, after I had served one year as its president,” remarked Richard, as he commented, with appreciation, on the

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skillful craftsmanship necessary to carry out the detail in the chased gold mounting of the handle, which was ornamented with a carved emblem in Greek letters, surrounded by Richard's own name engraved in Old English.

When the car stopped at the market on the way down town, Richard casually remarked:

“Well, the umbrella is completely out of commission, so we shall have to make the best of the situation.”

The storm had not abated and before Eleanor and Richard could get under cover, she said good-humoredly:

“This must be the second flood, but in any event, we are here.”

“First of all, let's find some good potatoes for baking.

“I believe I like good baked potatoes better than any other vegetable in the world. Here are some nice, smooth ones. They are very solid. I think these are just what we want,” suggested Richard, as he turned to the clerk and ordered him to send one-half bushel.

“You always want to look for just that kind of a potato,—they are sure to be mealy and not watery. Now, let's find some spinach and some asparagus,” concluded Richard.

“Here they are over this way,” said the clerk, as he led his customers to the other side of the store.

“You see, I used to help my mother do her marketing,” exclaimed Richard. “I was the youngest of her children and she always wanted me to go about with her. Now, that is fine asparagus, but the spinach is of an inferior quality,” commented Richard, as he pointed out to Eleanor the merits and defects of the goodly array of vegetables before them.

Just at this instant, Richard's eye fell upon some tempting artichokes.

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“Did you just get these in this morning?” he queried of the clerk.

“Yes, they came in this morning,” replied the ruddy faced Swede, who waited upon them.

“But they are so high priced. It is out of all reason,” protested Eleanor. “Let’s wait until they get cheaper,” she suggested.

“No. We’ll have them now. Some way I have confidence enough in myself to believe that it is not going to be necessary for us to limit ourselves on either the variety or the quantity of food required to furnish a good table. Send four artichokes. Now, let’s get some cheese. Have you any Gruyere cheese?” Richard questioned.

“Yes, it’s eighty-five cents a box,” replied the clerk.

“Eighty-five cents for that small quantity. Why, that is outrageous! Richard, how can you? Do stop! If we start out living this way, we will surely end our days in the poor-house,” protested Eleanor.

“I’ll take my chances. Now, let’s get some lemons. You know how to make a lemon meringue pie, don’t you?”

“Yes, I think so. Anyway, I have a recipe book, which mother gave me when I left Washington. I have never tried making lemon pie yet, but I’ll promise to have one tonight when you come home.”

Richard then gave the clerk an order for twenty-five pounds of sugar, one sack of bread flour, one sack of pastry flour, one pound of tea, one pound of coffee, and finally wound up by instructing the Swede to put in five pounds of beans.

“Why Richard, have you gone crazy?” queried Eleanor. “We wouldn’t eat five pounds of beans in two years.”

“Oh, yes, we will. When you get on one of your

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artistic sprees, decorating and painting, just bake me some beans and I'll get along fine. I'll never starve if I have beans! You know I told you last night that I'm a strong, healthy man and I need NOURISHMENT," laughingly concluded Richard, as he led the way out of the store, across the street to the meat market.

"There's a good ham. It has much lean and just enough fat. It was well cured, too. Smoked just right. Send that ham," Richard instructed the butcher.

"Well, I don't know what we'll ever do with a whole ham," said Eleanor, with a sigh.

"Oh, we'll use it all right," said Richard. "When you get absorbed with your fancy work and you don't want to bother with a roast or any meat, which requires a long time to cook, just fry me some ham, cut thin and very well done," remarked Richard.

"Now, let's see what you have in the finest Porter-house roasts," suggested Richard.

"That looks very good there. How much does that weigh?" queried Richard.

"Five pounds," answered the stocky butcher, as he adjusted his scales and squinted his eyes, thus giving the impression of his desire to be extremely accurate in weighing his meats.

"Very good. Send it," said Richard.

"Why, Richard, we can never use it," said Eleanor. "A two pound roast is all that we can possibly manage," she continued.

"I'll manage it all right," said Richard. "Really, you know, you're just beginning to get acquainted with my appetite. I've been holding myself in restraint all these months. I've been afraid until now to let you know how hungry I

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really have been! I tell you, I've been using a lot of energy. It takes some gray matter to arrive in a town like this a total stranger and hustle around to get business and clients. I've worked like Hercules and I have an appetite like a Fiji Islander," concluded Richard. "I am determined to go on, until like the heroic son of Jupiter, I shall achieve twelve great tasks, and with all my labors I am resolved, with a high resolve that knows no curbing, to get enough to eat," concluded Richard.

It was still storming, when they reached the street, and Richard, in spite of Eleanor's vehement protests, hailed a taxi and sent her home.

"You'll need all your strength to cook that dinner to-night, without using any of it to walk home, combating this storm," suggested Richard, good-naturedly, as he helped Eleanor into the taxi, kissed her goodbye and sent her on her way.

Eleanor was simply dazed by the revelation which had come to her that morning. She had not realized before that she had failed, during her four months of married life, to cater to Richard's desire for a good living;—for well-balanced, nourishing meals, with plenty of good, wholesome food, well cooked and well served.

Surely now, Richard had made it plain enough that he wanted a better table provided. Eleanor was over-awed, not only by the kind and variety of food which Richard seemed to require, but by the quantity as well. Most of all, she was non-plussed by the obvious, prospective increase in their household expenses, and by Richard's apparent tendency to extravagance;—for Eleanor had been reared carefully, and although the elder Fairchilds were moderately well-to-do, she had been trained always to be economical.

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Ever since she and Richard started housekeeping, she had figured closely on setting their table so as to make her household expenses as little as possible.

She remembered that Richard had brought West with him about two thousand dollars. This amount was over and above that which they had set aside to spend for furnishing their new home.

Richard still had fifteen hundred dollars in the savings bank and he was already getting a start with his law practice.

Once inside the door of the Radcliffe cottage, Eleanor was determined that Richard should not be disappointed in the dinner which she would serve to him that evening.

She began at once to make her preparations. She took the recipe book from the shelf in the cupboard, and perused it with diligence. She laid her plans for the construction of the lemon pie, as carefully as a great military genius would outline and construct the preliminary details for a great defensive campaign; and surely Eleanor was on the defensive now. She must defend her right to maintain her position, in its most strategic situation, as the wife of Richard Radcliffe, by demonstrating her ability to make his home all that he would have it.

She wrestled with the roast of beef; the brown gravy; the baked potatoes; the asparagus, and the artichokes, until they were about to materialize in regular fashion on the dining-room table.

She felt in her heart that her efforts had been crowned with success in every particular, except in the making of the lemon meringue pie.

She knew that the filling of the pie was not thick enough, and that the meringue was neither fluffy enough nor deep

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enough to please the fastidious and exacting tastes of her epicurean young husband.

When Richard came home that evening, the aroma of the coffee and the roast beef greeted his olfactory senses.

“By George, I’ll say that you got away with it this time. This is a rattling good dinner. You’ve done yourself credit, ” exclaimed Richard, after he had seated himself at the table and started in to do justice to the roast beef and baked potatoes.

“Forewarned is forearmed, you know,” laughingly remarked Eleanor. “I thought I might lose my happy home if I didn’t succeed in satisfying the wants of the inner man better than I have been doing,” she continued, half smiling.

“Why, of course, I was only teasing you. I probably over-did it though,” responded Richard, good-humoredly.

“That’s all right for you to say now that you were only teasing, but I’m just sure that you were in dead earnest for you looked so grave and serious when we were marketing this morning, and I’m sure the butcher must have thought that you had been starving for at least a month,” commented Eleanor, good-naturedly.

“Well, I do appreciate good living. Nothing suits me better. You know my father, about whom I have told you so much, served in Congress from Indiana for many years, and we used to keep open house,—I might almost say, for all of his constituents for many miles around. He always wanted a good table. He used to say that to economize on articles of food was very poor business. He believed that eventually such economy would take heavy tolls from one’s health and spirits; decrease one’s usefulness and reduce one’s efficiency and earning power. He used to say, too, that, if one must economize it should be in other expenditures than

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those of the table, which would lead to less serious consequences.

“I just about idolized my father. I think he was the handsomest man whom I ever saw. He was six feet two inches tall, of excellent proportions, very dignified carriage, and gentle behavior.

“Although I was not born until ten years after the close of the Civil War, I remember very well hearing my father tell about it. He was practising law in our town when the war broke out. He volunteered at the very beginning of the struggle and left mother and four children, that he might go to serve his country. There were several acres of land about our house and I remember my older brothers telling me that they had to get very busy even though they were very young, to help raise enough vegetables in the garden for the family to eat. Father left some money in the bank, of course, but mother had to be very saving; for no one knew how long the war might last, or what extremity would arise.

“It was in 1866, a year after the war closed, that father was elected to Congress. This was nine years before I was born. Father was sent to Congress on his war record, for he had served as a Brigadier-General; had met Lincoln several times, and was counted among the President’s military advisers and closest friends.

“He remained in Congress for fourteen years. I have a faint recollection of one of the visits which he made at home, just before his last term in Congress expired. I remember how he took me in his arms, when he came into the nursery and played with me and my rocking-horse. Then, too, I remember when he went away. I can see him now, waving his hand at mother, who stood in the window with me in her arms, and with all the other children on either side of her.

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I can remember hearing her say that it was not nearly so sad a day for her as when my father went back to the war, after he had been home on a furlough in 1864.

“Years afterward, when my father had retired from Congress and was at home with us, I was never able to picture him as a distinguished General of the Civil War, or a prominent Member of Congress. I could only think of him as my play-mate and companion, — my father, not a General, who had told one man to go and another to come at his bidding.

“As I grew up I can remember my father’s discoursing on the horrors of war with all its gruesomeness and woe. He used to say that wars of aggression and conquest, which only added to the dominions of countries, were the cruelest epochs in all history; because it did not matter whether a country comprised a few hundred square miles, more or less, but it did matter whether the people who lived in it loved their rulers with true loyalty and heart devotion.

“Two of my father’s brothers fought on the side of the North with him, but one of them, who dwelt close to the Kentucky line, was rather inclined to be sympathetic to the South. However, this near Rebel sympathizer had his horses taken away from him,—conscripted for the Union Army. After the war was over he put in his claim against the Government to be reimbursed for the value of the horses. My father was in Congress at this time, but he was always so consistently loyal to President Lincoln and the Union; so full of practical patriotism, as well as National idealism, that he could not tolerate the idea of reimbursing for conscripted property, any American citizen, who had not been one hundred per cent loyal to the cause of the Union. He would not even make an exception of his own brother; and so, when my

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uncle brought forth his claim my father challenged it, making an imperative demand of my uncle that he should first prove his absolute loyalty to the Union Government, during the war, before any consideration should be shown to his claim.

“My uncle then dropped the matter, for he knew that it would embarrass him to have many of his statements concerning the war made public.

“You might judge from this that my father was lacking in affection for his brother. On the contrary, my uncle had always been his favorite brother and it really grieved my father that his conscience forced him to take the stand which he did.

“I am merely telling you of this incident, because I have always been proud of the fact that my father’s patriotism was so deep that it made all of his personal interests subservient to his lofty principles. In fact, when father volunteered to serve his country, he knew that it would bring hardship to my mother and her brood of children; but she was as idealistic as he, and encouraged him to go forward.

“In fact, the first thing I can remember clearly is a story which my mother told me when I was sitting by her knee. It was about my father’s going away to the war many years before, why he went; she tried to make it plain that it was because of his loyalty to the Great Spirit of Good which rules over all of us. Some way my childish mind seemed to grasp this; that there was Something outside of ourselves, Bigger than ourselves, always urging us to be better and to do better. I know, now, that my mother made me feel that it was right that my father had served in the war and that he had gone because he knew it was best for the

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country and best for the loved ones whom he was leaving behind.

“I remember, too, that when father was away from home, serving in Congress, mother used to take me in her arms, across the big living-room, and stand in front of my father’s picture, telling me as she did so: ‘I want you to grow up to be as good a man, just as true and loyal and honest as your father is.’

“This incident impressed itself indelibly on my plastic boyish mind and it has always served to keep me on my guard whenever principles or ideals are at stake. No matter what temptation might come to me, the memory of my father’s devotion to his country, and his sterling principles would always save me from playing recklessly or unscrupulously in the Game of Life.

“I can understand, to some degree, the ancestor worship of many Oriental peoples; for instance, the Japanese Shintoism. They want to perpetuate all the merit of their fathers before them. That to me is a very worthy aspiration, worthy of the emulation of all people,” concluded Richard, while he made an attack with his fork on the lemon meringue pie.

He had become so absorbed in eulogizing his deceased father; so much in earnest in praising the things for which his distinguished father had stood, that he was almost unmindful of the defects of the constituents of the lemon pie.

“I’m going to make a better pie the next time,” Eleanor remarked. “I’m not at all satisfied with this one,” she added.

“Never mind. This is very good, indeed, for your first attempt. The rest of your dinner more than makes up for your not having the ‘bulge’ on the lemon pie. That’ll come

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later. Tomorrow morning suppose you try your luck at a Spanish omelette."

"I don't know how to make a Spanish omelette and I don't believe I have any recipe for making one. I wouldn't be afraid to try a plain omelette," answered Eleanor.

"Didn't you ever eat a Spanish omelette? Well then you don't know what an omelette is. You just fix them with green peppers and dressing and tomato sauce on the inside. I'll show you how. I've seen my mother make them. She was the finest cook who ever lived," concluded Richard, with a far-away look in his eye.

"Well, I knew it would come sooner or later. Mother told me to expect it. I'm surprised you haven't said it before," said Eleanor.

"Knew what would come? What do you mean?" queried Richard, in perplexed mood.

"That you would tell me your mother was a better cook than I," said Eleanor, while her lips trembled.

Before Richard could get himself together to soothe Eleanor's disturbed state of mind, she was in tears.

"Well, I'll be jiggered! I never thought of hurting your feelings. What did I say anyway?"

"You said you would try to teach me to make a Spanish omelette like your mother used to make; and I don't see how you can expect me, with my experience, to know how to make all these unusual dishes like a woman who knew how to cook all her life. I've done the best I know how and I don't think you appreciate how hard I've worked this afternoon to get this big dinner for you," exclaimed Eleanor, while her voice broke into mournful sobs.

"I never said anything of the kind," ejaculated Richard, his voice rising. "I merely suggested that I would be glad to

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help you make a Spanish omelette because you have evidently never seen one. I never dreamed you would burst out this way. I'm surprised," concluded Richard, his face covered with an expression of anxiety and perplexity.

"Well, I think you're very unreasonable," commented Eleanor snappily, as she rose from the table, wiped away the tears with her handkerchief, and went into the living-room, where she buried her face in the pillows of the davenport and continued to weep.

Richard sat alone at the table for a few minutes. He was in deep reflection. What did it all mean? Had he really been unjust? No, he hadn't been. He had only expressed a wish for something which he liked, and because his wife was not prepared to meet his wishes in the matter, he had told her that he would help her make the omelette, because he had seen them made at first hand by his own good mother. Surely he had the right to mention his mother; the same right as he had to mention his father. Eleanor had seemed interested while he was discussing his father, but now that he had merely referred to the fact that he had seen his mother make an unusual kind of omelette, he had completely upset his young wife's nerves.

All these meditations passed through Richard Radcliffe's mind in rapid succession; and the more he pondered, the more confused he became.

Then he remembered that his mother had always told him to treat his sisters with sympathy and chivalry, because they were more delicately constituted than he, both mentally and physically; and that he must try to understand them.

Then Richard's heart began to soften. He could almost hear his mother talking to him, as she had in the long ago, when she had reminded him to look out for Matilda and to

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keep an eye on Marietta, even though they were a year and a half and three years older than he.

Richard arose from the table and walked slowly toward the living-room. Eleanor's flood of tears had subsided somewhat, although she was still reclining on the davenport.

As Richard approached her, he said apologetically:

"I'm very sorry that I said anything which hurt your feelings. You know that I didn't mean to," he said tenderly, as he put his arm around Eleanor's waist, and continued:

"Let's forget it; it doesn't amount to anything, anyway. The whole thing is a mighty small matter compared with the larger things of life. Now will you kiss me?" he queried.

"I would if I thought you didn't mean to infer, by your reference to your mother, that you still hold her in the place of supreme affection in your heart. I believe you think more of her memory than you care for me," said Eleanor, as she made an effort to draw herself away from Richard.

"Now, don't be silly. You wouldn't want a husband who didn't cherish the memory of his mother, would you? You wouldn't have any confidence in me at all if I did not revere her memory. I can't understand why you should come to grief over such a foolish matter," ejaculated Richard.

"Well, leaving your mother out of it, am I really the only woman except her whom you ever loved?"

"Well, of all things! Such a question! Why, of course, you know you are. You foolish little darling," exclaimed Richard, as he took Eleanor in his arms and kissed her fondly.

She continued to sit beside him, while she remarked:

"I had a friend in boarding-school, Sophie Dearborn, whom we girls used to call 'Peter.' She had been about the

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world a great deal more than any of the rest of us, because her mother was dead and her father was away from home a great deal. She used to travel with him. She knew a good many actresses and chorus girls whom she had met at the sea-shore, and she used to tell us girls that a man with a past was much more interesting than a man without one. This has always puzzled me because you have always been interesting, Richard, ever since I knew you; and yet you have told me time and again, as you have just now that I'm the only girl whom you have ever loved. If that is true, then you have not had a past and I wonder why you are so interesting. Sophie used to say that a real girl always loved a man who had had a past better than she did one who had not," concluded Eleanor, in a manner which indicated that there was still a question in her mind.

"Well, do you think you would love me more if I had had a past?" queried Richard, smilingly.

"Well, Sophie, 'Peter' as we called her, was a pretty wise girl, so I'll have to admit that I might love you more if you had had a past," answered Eleanor, with a strategic expression, which indicated that she was holding something back.

"Well then, I suppose I had better be frank and admit to you that I have had, — well, — not really a past, no one else whom I really loved, but I have had other sweethearts," answered Richard frankly.

"You wretch! Now, you admit it. I knew all the time you were keeping something from me! Other sweethearts! Of course, I might have known that you had. I'm going home to mother. If you don't give me some money I shall telegraph her to send it," concluded Eleanor angrily.

"Well, I'll be jigged! You never do know when I'm

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joking you. Don't you know that I was joking you all along? Couldn't you see that I was only teasing you? I turned my face away because I feared you would detect the twinkle in my eyes. Now, come on, I'm going to help you pick up the dishes. We're going to forget all this foolishness. It's too silly to be given a thought by intelligent minds. Come on now," ejaculated Richard, as he took Eleanor by the hand and led her back to the dining-room, where he kissed her again.

Richard then went seriously to work, helping to pick up the dinner dishes; then he brushed the crumbs from the dining-room table. Eleanor washed the dishes, while Richard dried them on a soft towel. Then he made a fire in the grate in the living-room and the two sat down for a peaceable, enjoyable evening;—Eleanor with her embroidery, and Richard with a volume of Mark Twain, from which he read aloud to her.

On each side of the fire-place were built-in book-cases, with soft hand-made curtains, which slid back and forth on a rod. The library contained the standard works of the classic English authors, many translations from the best literature in other languages, and a goodly number of books, relating to the law, — such as an elegantly bound volume of Blackstone's Commentaries, — Jones on Mortgages, Moore on Facts, and Lawson on Contracts. Then, too, there was a copy of Samuel Warren's Ten Thousand A Year, — a work of fiction which will always be a favorite among lawyers. There were many didactic discourses from the most discerning and scholarly legal minds. This collection of books represented young Radcliffe's literary tastes over a period of years, dating from his school days to the present time.

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Here and there, were works of George Ade, Mr. Dooley, and other writers in lighter vein.

Eleanor Radcliffe's home training had been so directed that she had a true appreciation of the best books, although her natural inclination led her to the frequent perusal of fiction and essays.

Both Richard and Eleanor were so well-grounded in the best literature that they found most of their diversion in reading, especially since they were new comers in a strange city, which did not furnish a great variety of the best amusements.

CHAPTER III

Richard Radcliffe's First Case In the West

RICHARD RADCLIFFE'S first client was a ranchman, — a tall, gaunt, lanky, husky Westerner, with squinty eyes and straight bushy black hair, — Lem Simpkins by name.

Lem was a careful man, who attended to all matters forehandedly. His fall ploughing was always done early. His crops were many times well on their way before those of his neighbors were even started. He used the best seed and the highest grade of fertilizer. He re-stocked his farm by select and discriminating breeding. His spring shoats, his sleek smooth calves, and his well-groomed mare, all bespoke thought and attention.

In midsummer he had decided to build a fire-place in the big living-room of his log cabin. He had employed a brick mason to make an opening recess in the wall, where he might have a hearth about six feet by three.

The brick mason assured Lem that he had given him the best workmanship possible in the construction of fire-places. Lem paid him in gold dollars, — for gold was the principal medium of exchange in the far West in those days.

Jim Bellows, for that was the brick mason's name, went his way, but when fall came and Lem started his first fire, he was smoked completely out of house and home. He tried for three days to make the fire-place work, but with no success.

Then, Lem saddled his bay mare and hied his way to Jim

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Bellows' cabin, where Lem besought him to bring his tools as soon as possible, and correct his faulty piece of workmanship.

Jim Bellows argued that he had done his best; that he could do no more; that if there was any defect in the fireplace, it was not his fault.

Lem insisted that he should come to see it, but Jim Bellows refused even to do that, — saying over and over again, that he knew he had originally done a perfectly good piece of work.

Finally, with some hasty remarks, tinged with profanity, he ordered Lem Simpkins off his premises, — threatening physical force, if the farmer did not leave at once.

Lem went home, for it was getting near to milking time, but his heart was filled with animosity toward the unjust and conscienceless Jim Bellows.

Not long after this incident on a very dark night, it transpired that a strong athletic man of sinewy build and angular features, overtook Jim Bellows on the highway near his home and gave him a severe beating, so that the blows inflicted upon him left him in a highly discolored and painful condition, with the result that he was unable to do a day's work during the following fortnight.

As soon as Jim Bellows was able to be about, he went to the office of the Prosecuting Attorney for the County, and told his story in such an effective manner that the District Attorney decided to prosecute Lem Simpkins for Assault and Battery, since Jim Bellows bore every indication that his injuries were the result of willful violence from a fierce antagonist; and he knew that he had no other enemy in the community save Lem Simpkins, — since the latter was the

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only person with whom he had had any serious disagreement.

Accordingly, Lem Simpkins was summoned by the authorities of the law to appear in the Court of a Justice of the Peace, by the name of Sam Dingle.

Now, it happened that previous to the trial of Simpkins, the Prosecuting Attorney, Robert Dunne, who was a powerful and influential personage in that pioneer country, warned Sam Dingle that Lem Simpkins had engaged to defend him a young spurt of an attorney by the name of Richard Radcliffe, who thought he was deucedly smart and clever, and who would undoubtedly attempt to make an argument on demurrer and have the case against his client thrown out of Court for No Cause of Action.

The sessions of Justice Dingle's Court were held in a little, old log school house, with the Justice sitting by the teacher's desk, near a window, at his back, which admitted enough light for the Justice to be able to distinguish the plaintiff in the action from the defendant.

The day before the case was called, Robert Dunne had told Justice Dingle to refuse to listen to the argument on demurrer, in order that the full penalty of the law might be inflicted upon the offender, — Lem Simpkins, defendant.

As soon as the Court convened, young Radcliffe arose, addressing Justice Dingle in appealing and convincing language, and made an earnest argument, including the most logical reasons why Justice Dingle should listen to an argument on demurrer and dismiss the case against his client from Court.

Before young Radcliffe was able to conclude his eloquent plea for Lem Simpkins, Justice Dingle waved his hands violently in the air and shouted: "Sit down! Sit down!"

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This Court knows its business. You can't argue for any demurrer here. Sit down!"

And, then, the old pioneer war horse struck the desk with a heavy wooden gavel, as if to strike out all argument in behalf of the defendant. It looked now like an easy victory for the plaintiff. Jim Bellows bore a satisfied, elated expression, and the Prosecuting Attorney, Robert Dunne, was well assured that his carefully laid plans would not miscarry.

Suddenly, young Radcliffe turned to a blank fly-leaf of an old law book and mumbled in an undertone, but loud enough for the Court to hear, these words:

"If any Justice of the Peace in this State shall refuse to listen to an argument on demurrer, he shall have his household goods, chattels, and other property, seized and confiscated, and be sentenced to not less than one year and not more than five years' term of service in a State Penitentiary."

The old Justice perked up his ears and listened.

"What's that? Read that over again!" he said insistently, — being so ignorant of the law that he did not detect the erroneousness of what Richard Radcliffe had read, — and so unsuspecting that he did not dream that the young lawyer had resorted to strategy and improvised, on the spur of the moment, every word which he had uttered.

Just then the Prosecuting Attorney, realizing that he was pitting his own wits against a very able and resourceful young opponent who might cause him to lose his case, shouted:

"Justice Dingle, don't listen to that daring young upstart! That obstreperous skin-flint! He'll get the best of you, if you do!"

But Justice Dingle was scared. He feared that in some way the Prosecuting Attorney himself was trying to trip

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him, or get him into trouble, so the old Justice said emphatically in very loud tones:

“Sit down there, Mister Prosecutor! This Court knows its business!” And again, Justice Dingle beat the desk furiously with his gavel. Then he repeated:

“Radcliffe, read that over again, by the Order of the Court, — what you just read from the Law, I mean; and read it a little louder this time, please, so that I can hear it all.” And he put one hand over the lobe of his left ear, in which he was known to be a little “hard of hearin’,” as he then explained.

Radcliffe again read triumphantly, in deep, loud tones:

“If any Justice of the Peace in this State shall refuse to listen to an argument on demurrer, he shall have his household goods, chattels and other property, seized and confiscated, and be sentenced for not less than one year and not more than five years to serve in a State Penitentiary.”

In a frightened tone, Justice Dingle exclaimed:

“Well, what shall I do with this case? What would you do?” And he looked young Radcliffe straight in the eye for an answer.

“Do? Why throw the case out of Court, of course!”

“Very well,” said the old Justice, who was utterly ignorant of the rules of legal Court procedure, and equally as unfamiliar with the formalities of dismissing cases from Court.

Then, suddenly, Justice Dingle grabbed all the papers which had been filed in connection with the case; — took them in his arms, opened the window at his back and threw the Complaint and Answer out of the window, remarking in vigorous tones, as he did so:

“This case is now out of Court!”

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The outburst of laughter, which followed Justice Dingle's peremptory and uncereemonious dismissal of the Case, was too contagious not to spread its influence to the Prosecuting Attorney, Robert Dunne, and to the plaintiff, Jim Bellows, disappointed as they were at the outcome of their case.

Of course, Richard Radcliffe and Lem Simpkins left the Court-room in highly elated spirits. From that day, Richard Radcliffe became locally famous, and his reputation as a resourceful, capable attorney dated from this time. It had been a small incident, — a case, seemingly so unimportant, that few lawyers would have bothered with it, but it brought Richard Radcliffe many clients, and in the end, big, lasting returns.

The unusual wit and skill which he had displayed in this instance, he soon brought into play in representing prominent business concerns. Seemingly, by a strange trick of the Fates, his first case served to advertise his ability as a lawyer throughout the entire Northwest section of the United States. Up to this time, young Radcliffe had had an up-hill road in trying to establish his practice in a new country, but, after this, his clients increased in numbers to such a degree that his success was assured.

A few weeks after the occurrence in Justice Dingle's Court, an Indian, by the name of Red Feather Alki, was arrested, charged with the murder of a white man, near Mount Olympic, whose name was Benjamin Reed.

Reed owned extensive apple orchards in the Wenatchee Valley. Red Feather had bought some apples from him and a dispute had arisen when it came time to measure the quantity of apples,—Red Feather accusing Reed of having given him "poor measure". An abrupt, hasty quarrel ensued. One of Reed's neighbors, who was standing nearby, inter-

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vened and prevented a hand-to-hand combat between Red Feather and the white man.

The Indian went home in enraged spirits. He refused to take the apples or to pay for them.

That night, Reed was murdered in his log-cabin. The following day, Red Feather was apprehended, taken into custody by the officers of the law and lodged in the County Jail, charged with the murder of Benjamin Reed. It looked like a plain, straight case of murder in the first degree.

Red Feather had heard of Richard Radcliffe and sent for the latter to defend him. As soon as Radcliffe could go over the grounds and premises, surrounding the Reed Ranch, he made a careful examination of the foot-prints in the mud along the road leading to Reed's orchard and cabin. There was a strong imprint in the mud, which indicated, beyond a doubt, that a bare-footed man had traveled this road as far as the Reed orchard and then turned toward the cabin, where the foot-prints disappeared.

Every one believed that Red Feather had discarded his Indian moccasins so as to disguise his trail.

Richard Radcliffe was convinced, after his first talk with Red Feather, that the accused Indian was not guilty and he set to work with all possible haste to accumulate evidence in defense of his client. He had a Plaster of Paris mould made of the Indian's foot, and another mould of the same substance, which was an exact duplicate of the imprint of the foot-tracks in the mud along the highway and the trail which led to Benjamin Reed's cabin.

In this way, Radcliffe discovered that there was no similarity between the imprint of the Indian's foot and that of the foot-tracks in the mud along the road which Red Feather

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was supposed to have traveled before he committed the murder of which he stood accused.

On the day of Red Feather's trial, Richard Radcliffe made an earnest plea to save the life of his client.

In his preliminary remarks he dwelt briefly upon the merits and virtues of the Red Race, and then proceeded to discourse upon the fact that, up to this time, Red Feather had always borne a reputation for loyalty to his tribe and honesty in all his dealings with white men. He then referred to the witnesses for the defense, many of whom were numbered among the best known and most influential citizens of the community, all of whom had given testimony as to the good character and noble deeds of Red Feather, who had upon one occasion, given one of his most loved dogs to the widow of a white man in order that she and her children might have some small recompense for a slight favor which the widow's husband had done for Red Feather, just previous to the white man's death. Red Feather had really given the bereaved woman his best dog to defend her and her children in the absence of their deceased protector.

More than this, Radcliffe cited another instance, where Red Feather had proven his heroic qualities. It happened that one time when he was walking from the reservation on which he lived to the City of Mount Olympic, he saw just ahead of him a small boy, about four years of age, who was playing on the railroad track.

Red Feather heard a train approaching, and immediately he rushed forward to rescue the white child. Red Feather pushed the little boy off the track and barely escaped death himself by his heroic action.

At the climax of Radcliffe's plea, in defense of his client, he brought forth the Plaster of Paris imprints of the foot-

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tracks which led to Reed's cabin on the night of his murder. Then he exhibited the plaster mould of the Indian's right foot, which he compared with the reproduction of the right foot of the man who had traveled over the road to Reed's home a short time before the latter's tragic death.

The jury and judge were convinced beyond a doubt that Red Feather was innocent. The Indian was acquitted.

Not long after this, a white man, — a ranchman, by the name of Stingyman, who was known throughout the country as a close-fisted, hard, oppressive man, confessed, upon his death-bed, that several weeks before he had quarreled with Reed over some logged-off land, which they had cleared together, with the understanding that they should divide the profits from the timber sold. Stingyman claimed that Reed had taken in the money for the timber and that he had kept a great deal more than his rightful share of the proceeds. Reed had promised Stingyman an amicable settlement, from time to time. One evening, Stingyman had gone to Reed's home to talk matters over and to come to a final decision, concerning the apportionment of the money. They had quarreled again. Finally, Stingyman challenged Reed to settle the matter by physical force, with the agreement that whoever won the fight should have all the money for the timber. Reed struck the first blow. Stingyman came back at him with such tremendous power that Reed was overcome. Stingyman's blow proved fatal, although he declared when he was dying, he had not intended to murder Reed.

Richard Radcliffe's insight into human nature, which had been proven so conclusively by his ability to read Red Feather's thoughts, and which had been demonstrated to such capital advantage in his defense of Red Feather at the latter's trial, served the young pioneer lawyer in good stead throughout

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his future career. His services were sought, of course, by guilty criminals; but if he believed a man to be guilty, Richard Radcliffe never defended him. On the other hand, if he believed a man to be innocent, he never refused to take his case, — no matter how poor, or wretched, or miserable, the man might be.

Young Radcliffe established for himself, in his new environment, a standard which won the respect of the best citizens in the community. His first case, which had been tried in the country school-house, where he had so cleverly finessed the old Justice of the Peace, survived in the memories of his clients and the leading men of the Northwest, only as a humorous incident where a keen bit of extemporaneous wit and strategy had outwitted a more experienced, self-confident and egotistical opponent.

In the final analysis, Richard Radcliffe built his reputation and prestige entirely on the principles of integrity, justice and square dealing, which had characterized the brilliant career of his once distinguished father.

CHAPTER IV

A Little Fire Kindleth a Great Matter

“**I** HAVE just made up my mind to join the Olympic Club. Worthington-Hargreaves has just invited me to become a member. You remember that I brought a letter of introduction to him, when I came here. He is a Psi U, too, by the way, and it was the President of our National Fraternity Organization, who recommended me to him.

“Young Hargreaves has just inherited a very substantial fortune from his father, who was one of the pioneers in this country. The older Hargreaves went into Alaska, many years ago, and was very successful in mining operations. He probably took more gold and silver out of Alaska than any other one man of his day.

“Hargreaves has seemed to like me from the first. Very recently, he has given me considerable business. He is gradually getting away from an old firm of attorneys here, who have always represented his father's estate.

“Only yesterday, he told me that he wanted me to make a trip for him to Copper Mountain, Alaska. It seems that his father owned a copper mine there, which has never been developed. The older Hargreaves accepted this mine in a trade, shortly before his death, and the administrators of his estate have never thought it worth while to invest any money in looking into its possible resources.

“Young Hargreaves is a pretty good sport. He wants

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to know just what the prospects are for getting something out of this mining property. He doesn't know much about it himself, and he has to start East day after tomorrow, to attend to some business matters in New York; so he wants me to make a trip to Alaska, to find out exactly what conditions are at Copper Mountain.

"If it should develop that there is anything worth while in this copper mine business, it will pay me very well. In fact, if it proves to be anything substantial, Hargreaves has assured me of a very liberal equity in the property, if I will go ahead with the responsibility of getting the copper out of Alaska," concluded Richard.

"I don't like to have you go away now. The weather is so dreary. We have so much rain and it is so gloomy being alone, especially at this time of the year. Can't you postpone this trip to Alaska until some other time?" queried Eleanor.

"I don't see how I can. Hargreaves wants me to go now and I always believe in the business policy of striking 'while the iron is hot'."

"I always thought you intended to build your reputation on your ability as a lawyer, not on some wild cat promotion mining scheme," interrupted Eleanor.

"Who said anything about a wild cat scheme? Or promoting a mine? You do get such queer ideas," exclaimed Richard, in a half disgruntled mood.

"Why, you said that Hargreaves promised you an interest in the mine if you would go ahead and sell the copper, didn't you?"

"No, I didn't say anything of the kind; — mining copper and getting it out of Alaska is a very different proposition from organizing a stock company and engineering a promotion scheme," said Richard with emphasis, and some mental

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reservations in regard to promoting the mine.

“I don’t see why. You have to sell the copper; you have to put it on the market before you can get any money out of it, don’t you?”

“Well, we won’t discuss the copper mine any further. I only spoke about going because I thought it best that you should write to your mother, or better still, telegraph her to come on to stay with you, while I am gone to Alaska. You know she has never visited us but once.”

“Why, Richard, you know very well that mother could never leave home on such short notice. She would have to know a month ahead, anyway.”

“A month? Well, I can’t see why, when she has three strong, healthy daughters and a perfectly good cook to leave in the house,” remarked Richard.

“Well! Wouldn’t she have to get clothes and pack trunks and leave everything in the house in perfect order? She simply couldn’t do it on any short notice. If you can wait a few weeks, I presume it is altogether likely that mother can arrange to come.”

“I am willing to take the responsibility of telegraphing her to come right away, because I have to go to Alaska on business. She’ll understand that. Besides, your father is a very sensible man and I don’t believe that he ever holds up important business matters, waiting for your mother to put her affairs in order so that he can leave town.”

“What do you mean? You needn’t wait either for me to put my affairs in order. You can go tomorrow if you want to, and I’ll go home,” concluded Eleanor, rather snappily.

“I am sure you must appreciate that it would hardly be possible for me to arrange to bear the expenses of a trip East for you, again, right now. As you know, I have tied up all my

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spare cash, except a rather small margin for current expenses. I did this after your trip East last spring.

“You know I have paid off the mortgage on this house; bought the new furniture you asked for, and the rest of my money I put into good Municipal and Corporation Bonds, so that you would have something besides this house and my small life insurance policy, in the event that anything should happen to me,” commented Richard.

“I didn’t know that you bought any bonds. Where are they?” questioned Eleanor.

“Why, in my safe deposit vault, of course. Where did you expect they were?”

“Well, I don’t see why you can’t sell one of them so that I can make a trip East. I would have to go to Washington, anyway, if any ill fortune overtook us,” suggested Eleanor.

“The facts are, I made so many sacrifices in order to save the money to buy these bonds for your protection, that I don’t feel like disposing of them unless some emergency should arise which would make it necessary. I have postponed, for a long time, the expense of joining the Olympic Club, so that I could save the money which I would naturally spend there; and there were numerous times when I would have gone out of town on little excursions ‘with the boys’ if it had not been that I was saving money for you,” concluded Richard.

“Well, I’m not surprised at that. It is just as I suspected. I’ve had an idea all along for the last few months that you wanted to get away from me, and now you admit it. I presume that’s more than half of the reason why you want to go to Alaska,” exclaimed Eleanor, while her voice trembled, and she broke into sobs.

“I can’t understand why you complain about the rain

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and the gloomy weather and yet insist upon running opposition to Niagara Falls," Richard remarked sarcastically.

"I won't stand your sarcasm. You can get me my ticket tomorrow morning. I'll go to Washington and you can go to Alaska whenever you like," insisted Eleanor, as she picked up a wool coverlet, which she was knitting for the davenport, and thrust it into her work-basket, which was filled with soft, old-rose yarn, twined in graceful skeins.

"Now, don't be foolish again. I heard you say only day before yesterday that you wanted your mother to come on to make you a visit and this is just the time for her, so let me go ahead and telegraph her to come. Then, if she hesitates or declines, we'll try to make some plan so that you can go to see her," suggested Richard.

"No, I want to go home," Eleanor continued to insist.

Richard said no more on this subject. But the next morning he took matters in his own hands, wired to Washington, and came home from the office with a telegram in his pocket, which he handed to Eleanor, as soon as he took his hat off.

It read as follows:

SIMPLY DELIGHTED TO VISIT YOU LET ME PLAN TO ARRIVE A FEW
DAYS BEFORE YOU LEAVE FOR ALASKA WILL REMAIN UNTIL YOU
RETURN MUCH LOVE TO YOU BOTH MOTHER

"Well, it's a nice time, I must say, to have mother visit us when you're going to be away. We can't go out anywhere. There will be no one to take us. We'll just simply have to sit at home and look at each other. We can't go to public amusements without an escort. We can't invite other women with their husbands to spend evenings with us, when there is no

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host in our house to receive them; so we shall be in a nice situation all around. Well, I suppose I'll have to make the best of it. That's all I can do. I want you to know, though, that I do object to your going ahead and making all arrangements, in regard to our affairs, without consulting me. I don't think it's considerate and I don't think it's fair," said Eleanor petulantly.

Secretly, she was glad that her mother was coming, but she was one of those independent, willful girls, who would not admit that she was pleased, unless it seemed consistent with her previous utterances. Eleanor was always fearful that she would not maintain her personal dignity, unimpaired. Her mind was like a crystal, rather than a brilliant meteor. It was clear, proud-spirited, and tenaciously exacting. Yes, after all, she thought, it would be best to have her mother come to her, but she would not gratify Richard enough to tell him so.

When she had concluded her protesting remarks, concerning her mother's contemplated visit, Richard said:

"Now, there isn't anything to prevent your having a splendid time all the while I am away. Hargreaves is going to be in the East and Mrs. Hargreaves will be alone, too. He has suggested, several times, that she must meet you and she is coming to call on you tomorrow. In fact, he apologized because she had not done this before; but she has not been able to make any calls since her baby boy was born, nearly a year ago. She is just beginning now to resume her social duties. I think you will find her very sweet and agreeable, and I want you to become very good friends with her. I met her, only a few days ago, in Hargreaves' office. She is an Eastern girl;—a graduate of the Miss Maxwells' School on the Hudson. Her father was a manufacturer in New York

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and they always lived in Montclair, New Jersey. She is just the type of woman whom you will like, and I think you will be much happier after you become acquainted with her," concluded Richard.

The following day, Mrs. Humphrey Worthington-Hargreaves came to call on Eleanor, who had commented to Richard the night before, that the name of her prospective caller sounded rather formidable.

Eleanor was agreeably surprised to find that her apprehensions were not well-grounded; for she found Mrs. Hargreaves to be a very simple, unassuming, unaffected, little lady, with a low, sweet voice and gracious manner. In fact, the simplicity of the latter was so utterly out of keeping with the well-known dignity and prestige of her social position, as the leader of the smartest set in the City of Mount Olympic, that Eleanor thought when she opened the door to receive her caller that it could not be Mrs. Hargreaves at all, until the unpretentious little woman, in a very quiet tone, said:

"I am Mrs. Hargreaves. I'm sure Mr. Radcliffe has told you that I have long intended to come to see you, but I have been obliged to postpone my visit for reasons that I know Mr. Radcliffe has been good enough to explain."

"Yes, I understand. I've been looking forward to your visit and I think it is very good of you to remember me when you must have so many cares and responsibilities, since the advent of your baby," answered Eleanor, in her usually well-modulated voice.

"I suppose I am like all other women, or at least, I hope I am not so different, in wanting to talk about my new baby. He's perfectly adorable and you must come to see him soon. Mr. Hargreaves told me today that he thought the child was becoming almost an obsession with me and that he was sure

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that I needed to get out to meet people and to see and hear other things. He has a man's point of view. He's just as fond of the baby as I am and makes just as much fuss over him; but he's a little more reserved about talking on the subject to everyone whom he meets," concluded Mrs. Hargreaves.

Eleanor served tea, using her daintiest, almost transparent, flesh-pink china set, hand-painted in forget-me-nots, with her finest Dresden linen, with its heavily embroidered medallions.

She chatted on with Mrs. Hargreaves, with the feeling of comradeship which characterizes much older acquaintances, and when it was time for her visitor to take leave, Eleanor Radcliffe was very grateful in her heart that she had made this charming new friend. She felt less lonely than she had for weeks. There was a warmth about Mrs. Hargreaves, which appealed to Eleanor, in spite of her own native tendency to reserve, and, her inclination to suppress her emotions. In fact, Mrs. Hargreaves had made Eleanor feel that there was some one in Mount Olympic on whom she could depend at any and all times, should she be in need of sympathy or companionship, outside of her own household.

Eleanor's mother arrived about three days in advance of Richard's sailing for Alaska. The day after she came, Richard was called out of town to accompany a party of surveyors, who were making an estimate of a large tract of property on which was located valuable timber, belonging to the Worthington-Hargreaves Estate.

Richard had left home early in the morning, with the assurance that he would return about five o'clock in the afternoon. About noon, a heavy rain-storm set in, which continued unabated, during the remainder of the day. At eleven o'clock, Eleanor had gone downtown to do some marketing,

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and before she returned home she had gone to the Majestic Theatre to purchase some tickets for that evening's performance of the Magic Ladder Girl, — a fantastic, musical extravaganza, of unusual artistic merit, comprising an all-star cast in the leading roles, with a chorus composed of many of the best known dancers, who had been appearing in New York for several seasons.

Eleanor arrived home just in time to escape the driving rain-storm. She had never been fond of the average musical show, but the spectacle for which she had purchased tickets, was of such out-standing fame for its remarkable theme that she said to her mother:

“You know I never care for ordinary musical, or dancing shows. Richard seems to like them. I should never have thought of attending this fantasy had I not read the review of it in a copy of *The New York Times*, which Cousin Camille sent to me. It is the story of the rise to fame of a young woman who worked in a florist's shop, where she was enchantingly inspired by the perfume of the flowers. She built a ladder to Heaven made of all the flowers which she had cultivated. Over each tiny flower which she loved, she would repeat a few words of hypnotic enchantment until the flower would increase its fragrance and magnify its size. At last, there was produced in this Garden of Eden, a ladder of flowers on which this ethereal girl ascended into Paradise, surrounded by millions of flowers. From each tiny flower there burst forth a cherub.

“These cherubs were encircled by other ethereal personages dressed in shimmering gowns. The older ones were borne along high in the Heavens by groups of merry, happy children, with laughing faces. Each flower became a living, vital creature, full of the vivacity, mirth and glee of childhood.

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The final triumph comes when the spiritual countenance of The Magic Ladder Girl appears in the center, high above the stage, and radiates the influence of her Goodness over all beings, high and low, earthly and Heavenly, material and celestial. What do you think of my idea, of going tonight, mother?"

"It all sounds very beautiful; but don't you think that a rough day in this rain-storm and the long journey, — way out to the lumber camp and back again, will be enough for Richard to do today, without dragging him off to the theatre tonight?" queried her mother.

"Oh, I don't think so. Besides, you know, this is only a one-night performance and we couldn't go tomorrow evening."

On his way to Eatonville, Richard recalled Eleanor's petulance, during the last conversation between them, which preceded her mother's arrival. He knew that there had been many times when Eleanor had felt a deep sense of loneliness, since they had come to Mount Olympic. Often, of late, he had thought that he could trace a sort of hidden sorrow in her face. Sometimes, she was almost melancholy. Perhaps, he thought, he had not provided enough diversion for her. A few months before, he had purchased a moderate priced automobile, with the idea of taking her out to drive frequently. He had hoped, at the time, when he first bought the car, that Eleanor would learn to drive it, so that she could take him back and forth to the office every day; but to his disappointment, he found that she had not the self-confidence to believe that she could handle a car well; so he had been obliged to content himself with driving the car down town in the morning and home again at night, and by taking Eleanor for a drive on Saturday afternoons and Sundays.

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Richard Radcliffe continued his ruminations as he drove on toward the Eatonville Lumber Camp. While his married life had not fully met his highest hopes, yet, he concluded, that he, no doubt, was happier than the average married man. Eleanor was very artistic. There was no question about that. When he had courted her he had thought that her sensibilities were unusually well harmonized; he knew that she had a strong will, but he had not objected to that, because he had believed that, after all, it indicated strength of character and would prove pliable in her relations with him. The natural refinement of Eleanor's intellect had made a strong appeal to him the first time that he had met her.

Perhaps, he thought, his ideals of what married life should be were too exacting. Possibly, he had set too high a standard; and no doubt, he admitted to himself, he had fallen short of this standard. He conceded that if there was any inharmonious note vibrating between him and Eleanor, it was, undoubtedly, as much his fault as hers.

And yet, he wished things might be different between them. They were not just as they should be. He had anticipated before he was married that the Divine Spark of an all-abiding love would ignite between him and his wife. But he must be frank with himself. He knew in his own mind that the Divine passion was missing in his marital union. He didn't know just why. He was beginning to believe what he had been told by more experienced men; that there is in most people a lack of capacity for permanent affection, — for continuous, sustained interest in any one individual, — for never ceasing devotion of one to the other. However, Richard Radcliffe was not willing to admit that he belonged to that class of individuals who are so lacking in the power of concentrated love. In fact, no one would be willing to admit such a thing.

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Radcliffe was no exception to the general rule in this particular, in believing himself capable of the highest heart interest, — the most exalted devotion, — the most permanent consecration of his affections. He convinced himself, as he thought matters over, that there was something lacking in Eleanor's emotional make-up.

He would make every effort to bridge over the little chasm which seemed to exist between them. He would try to mend this gap. He would do his best, he thought, as he recalled the lines of a poet who said:

“We, often, what our minds should blush with shame for,
Blame people the most for what they're the least to blame for.”

Although Richard Radcliffe was as free from jealousy as any high-minded man could be, at the same time, there was a misty thought which savored of jealousy which took possession of him, when he thought of Eleanor's continued absorption in the books of fiction, which she continued to read. Was it because of the dissatisfaction which she felt with her own married life, which caused her to pore over the works of the modern writers of romance? Did she hope to find in them a soothing balm for the strain of irritability which had come into her own life through an all-absorbing desire for a great love which her husband had not been able to inspire? No, Richard's self-respect and self-confidence would not permit him to yield to this conclusion. He was sure that Eleanor loved him in her way; but this way was not the way which he had expected. There were times when she showed him much tenderness and there were other times when she was painfully sensitive, and he thought worse than this, self-centered.

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When Richard had completed his long, weary journey to the lumber camp; taken cognizance of the work of the surveyors and of the possibilities of the complete development of a vast timber area, he thought with satisfaction of all that it was going to mean to his client, Worthington-Hargreaves, and himself.

Unquestionably, the prospect of large financial returns was assured. He would make a big sum of money out of this enterprise. He would be able to give Eleanor more things. He would cheerfully bestow upon her more luxuries. He would provide everything for her which could contribute to her material happiness; even if he was doomed to fail in meeting the desires of her heart.

On his way home, he thought of the cheerful fire which he would build in the living-room. He knew that this comfort of the hearth would not be waiting for him. Eleanor had never built a fire since they had been house-keeping. She was as helpless in such matters as a new-born babe. Perhaps he was partly to blame for this, because he had begun their married life by waiting upon her, and he had continued to anticipate her wishes to the slightest detail.

He had always looked after the heating apparatus in the basement before he left home in the morning, and again, when he returned at night. Eleanor never seemed to want a fire in the grate until evening; so she always left it for him to build.

He felt sure that on this occasion, she would have a good dinner, because her mother was at home to help prepare it, and she would want to have the best table provisions which the market afforded, during her mother's visit. Besides, Eleanor had really tried to improve in her cooking ever since the practical lesson which Richard had taught her in market-

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ing. However, Eleanor's artistic inclinations were in the ascendancy. They predominated over her physical desires and material wants; although she prized material things when they contributed to the development of her aesthetic nature. It was second nature for every one of the Fairchild name and traditions to plan very carefully in domestic expenditures, and the sense of domestic economy was accentuated in Eleanor Radcliffe, except where money was to be spent for artistic, interior decorating or furnishings.

When Richard arrived home from his trip to Eatonville, he found things very much as he had expected. His personal apparel, which he had worn that day, was in a badly disheveled state. His top-coat was dripping wet and he had a most uncomfortable sensation of dampness from head to foot. He rushed into the house, and after kissing both Eleanor and her mother, removed his coat, after which, he fairly shook with a cold chill.

Mrs. Fairchild was quick to suggest that they make some hot coffee, and that Richard should not wait for dinner before partaking of something which would alleviate his chill.

While Eleanor's mother made the coffee, Richard brought in some wood and built a fire in the grate. Meanwhile, Eleanor herself, was completing other plans for the dinner, which she assured Richard would be ready in a few minutes.

"I did not expect that you would be home quite so early. I really did plan to have my dinner as soon as you arrived, because I bought tickets for the theatre tonight, and it will be necessary for us to hurry a little, in order to be on time for the evening's performance."

Richard's countenance reflected nothing short of real disappointment at Eleanor's lack of understanding, in making

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such plans for an evening following such a nerve-racking, strenuous day.

“Well, I guess if I have to go to the theatre, I had better take some Cayenne Pepper tea, instead of drinking coffee, for I feel that I have taken cold,” said Richard, in a half resigned mood.

“Well, of course, you don’t have to go, but if you don’t, it will mean that I must sacrifice the tickets, unless I can find some one to use them, because there is to be only one appearance here of *The Magic Ladder Girl*. We haven’t done anything to entertain mother since her arrival and I think it’s about time that we took her out,” concluded Eleanor, with emphasis.

Richard went out to the kitchen to request Mrs. Fairchild to make the Cayenne Pepper tea.

“I think it’s a shame that Eleanor has planned for you to go to the theatre this evening. If you don’t feel like it, why simply call a taxi for Eleanor and me and let us go, by ourselves, or, perhaps, some friend of yours will be able to go with us,” remarked Mrs. Fairchild, while she prepared the hot drink for Richard.

“Oh, no! I’ll go. Eleanor seems to feel that we haven’t been entertaining you as we should; but, of course, there are very few things to go to here, as compared with Washington or New York.”

“Let my entertainment be the least of your worries. I get quite enough joy out of merely being in your home for a visit. It would make me most uncomfortable if I thought that you were putting yourselves to any inconvenience on my account. I really feel that it is an injustice to you to be called upon to go out with us after your trying day,” concluded Mrs. Fairchild, sympathetically.

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“No, Eleanor would be all broken up, if I were to stay at home, so I’ll be a game sport and manage someway to hold out for a few more hours,” concluded Richard, while he sipped his Pepper tea.

“Well, you’re very kind, but I know it’s unjust that you should go,” said Eleanor’s mother, just as Eleanor herself came into the kitchen to look after some minor details, in connection with the dinner.

On the day after the morrow, Richard sailed for Alaska, where he was to make a careful examination of all facts, relating to the mineral deposits on Hargreaves’ property at Copper Mountain.

Before Richard left home, Eleanor divulged a secret to him. From that moment, he was inclined to think of her with increasing tolerance, and to understand better the causes of her recent peevishness and irritability.

Indeed, Richard was so overjoyed at the prospect of an heir in the Radcliffe home, that he went away with a greater feeling of pride and contentment than he had experienced for many months.

He was bound for Ketchikan and he had promised Eleanor and her mother that he would write to them soon after his arrival, and that he would cable immediately after the ship landed.

The cable-gram, announcing that Richard had had a good voyage and was preparing to leave Ketchikan the following day to make the journey to Copper Mountain on foot, reached Eleanor on the third day after Richard left Mount Olympic. This was among the first cable messages to be transmitted from Ketchikan to Seattle, as the cable had just been laid. The letter came in due time.

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It was the first occasion since their marriage, on which they had been separated for more than a day.

Richard's letter vibrated with much tenderness of emotion, and brought back to Eleanor some of the old-time joy which she had felt when their romance was at its height. It read:

Dear Girl:

While I am writing this letter, the telegram which I just sent about a half hour ago, will, no doubt, be delivered to you.

You have been constantly in my thoughts ever since I left home, and I want to remind you over and over again of the necessity of your taking the best possible care of yourself at this precarious time.

Indeed, I am very sorry that I was called away from home just at this time, because if I could have remained at home, I would have insisted on your exercising the utmost discretion in all your activities.

I would be very much worried if it were not that you have your mother with you. I am sure that she will constantly watch over you, with all possible devotion and tenderness. There really is no necessity for you to impose upon yourself any responsibilities, while I am away. Your mother will look after the house. I have instructed my office to provide you with everything that you may need, in the way of money or credit; and the last thing before I left, I called up Mrs. Hargreaves and told her that I should very much appreciate any attention which she could show you, during my absence.

You see, I have met her so many times in her

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husband's office, that I feel very well acquainted with her. She was most agreeable, at all times, and during my last telephone conversation with her, she assured me that since she must be quite alone, during Hargreaves' trip East, she would find great pleasure in seeing you often, and that she would very soon invite you and your mother down to dinner.

I made arrangements with Top Hilton to come in every morning and evening, to look after the fires, for you and mother. He will also do any errands which you may require, and serve as an all-around handy man, while I am away.

I must start tomorrow for Copper Mountain. There is only a trail, rather poorly broken, so I shall have about seven miles overland journey on foot, and then, the ascent of the mountain. Some say it is twelve miles and others report that it is only seven, so I do not know.

Before I stop writing, I want to say that many times of late, when, perhaps, we may have thought we did not understand each other so well as we once did, I no doubt, have been to blame. I have been under considerable strain in handling the affairs of Hargreaves, and some other clients, whose business is in a complicated mess. I have had to fight some mighty hard battles to get started at all in a new country, where I was unknown. This has told on my nervous system, and while I do not wish to make any excuses for myself, I do want to say that my heart has always been in the right place toward you. If I have ever been inconsiderate, or lacking in generosity in my attitude in our relations, I want you

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to know that it has been only the result of an overtired sub-conscious mind.

The great ideal of my existence is to be kind and just. If I believed myself to be in any degree unjust to the one whom I love better than life itself, I would not consider myself a success, even though bonfires blazed from north to south and bells rang from east to west, in honor of my other deeds. I am merely writing you this that you may know what lies in the depths of my soul.

Now be good to yourself. Give yourself the best of everything. You can only offend me by doing without something which you really need for your comfort and greatest happiness.

Give my love to your good mother. You will hear from me again as soon as I get back to Ketchikan.

Devotedly,
Richard.

There was no doubt that Richard's letter had reawakened in Eleanor some of the old-time intensity of affection, which she had cherished in her girlish heart for the man of her choice. But she was too self-contained, too reticent, and too negatively balanced to mention the matter, even to her mother; for Eleanor was the type of woman who never has confidantes among her own sex, and who rarely gives her full confidence to her immediate women relatives.

In her heart, she was willful and assertive. She liked to have her own way as well as any woman of her self-centered disposition.

Eleanor knew that she should reply immediately to

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Richard's warm-hearted, thoughtful letter. He had told her before he went away to write him at the Revilia Hotel in Ketchikan. Anyway, he would be gone several days to Copper Mountain and she would write him in a day or two, she thought, after she had time to think just what she should say in reply to his tender expressions of love, which had characterized more fully their early romantic days, than they had the last few months of their married life.

When she did write, she was in none too good humor, because Top Hilton had come into the living-room to build a fire just a few minutes before, and he had tracked ashes all over Eleanor's best velvet rug. Besides, he had accidentally broken a pane of glass in the basement, and while replacing it, he had daubed his fingers with putty, which had so besmeared the glass, that Eleanor had decided to have a man from the hardware store come to remove the window glass and put in a clean piece, in place of the stained pane.

Eleanor wrote Richard much more briefly than he had written to her, and her letter was not so free of vein or spontaneous in its discourse.

She merely said:

Dear Richard:

We were glad to hear that you arrived safely.

The weather here has been fiendish. We have to have fires in both the furnace and the grate; but Top is more of a nuisance than he is help. He tracks ashes all over the best rugs, so I am going to tell him not to come any more; that mother and I will attend to the fires.

I hope that you will find something worth while at Copper Mountain. I haven't much faith that you

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will. Most mines turn out to be worthless. I wouldn't waste any time on this one, unless I was sure of its worth.

Besides, practising law is easier than developing mines. After all, no man really has a very hard time. I smiled when I read your letter, when you spoke about the strain in handling the affairs of some of your clients. I thought that if you were to manage a house for a few days that you would really know what it means to be under a real nervous strain. I detest the odor of food cooking. We aren't doing much cooking while you are away. Some day, I hope that they will operate community apartment houses in this town like they do in New York, so that we can send out and get our dinners all cooked.

Mother and I are going to Mrs. Hargreaves for dinner tonight.

Mother wishes to be remembered to you.

Ever yours,

Eleanor.

If Eleanor knew in her heart that she really owed it to Richard to write him a kinder letter, containing more heart-interest, she never let anyone else know what was in her mind.

She folded carefully the gray linen paper with the white border, on which was mounted, in artistic combination, the letters of her monogram. She placed the letter hurriedly in the envelope, while she heard the post-man ringing the door-bell, and, as he handed her some letters for her mother, she sealed her own letter to Richard, stamped it, and it was on its way.

Several days went by. There was no more news from

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Richard. Eleanor was not anxious about this, because he had told her that his stay at Copper Mountain would be indefinite. A week passed. Ten days were soon gone, and there was no word. Eleanor's mother began to worry, and Eleanor, herself, showed a little anxiety by beginning to look for the mail man a half-hour before he was due. Two weeks elapsed, and still no letter came. Eleanor sent a cable-gram to the Revilia Hotel in Ketchikan but it was returned to her undelivered. She was really worried now.

What could have happened to Richard? Surely some ill fate must have overtaken him. No doubt it was a perilous journey, Eleanor thought. It was an unfavorable season of the year, too; the early part of November,—cold, bleak, dreary weather.

“It was so foolish of him to start out on any such expedition. He ought to have known better. I can not see why he could not be satisfied just to continue his law practice in a civilized country, without attempting to pioneer in such a remote, barren, inhospitable region. I don't know what is best to do. Richard ought to have known that his long absence in so hazardous an undertaking would be too great a strain for me to bear at this particular period of time. It is just awful. I suppose that the best thing for us to do is to send some one from his office to Ketchikan by the next boat. What do you think?” Eleanor asked her mother.

“Well, whom can you send?”

“There is a clerk in Richard's office, by the name of Roger Blakeman, who is a rather energetic, resourceful young man. I think, perhaps, he had better go. There is a boat sailing day after tomorrow, but this suspense is terrible!” said Eleanor, as she broke down in tears.

Mrs. Fairchild telephoned to Richard's office and told

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young Blakeman to come up to the house at once; that Eleanor was suffering extreme mental depression, because it was nearly three weeks now since there had been any news from Richard, either at his office or at home.

As soon as Eleanor's mother was through talking with Mr. Blakeman on the telephone, she called up Mrs. Worthington-Hargreaves and explained to her why the latter had not heard from them since Mrs. Fairchild and her daughter had been so delightfully entertained by Mrs. Hargreaves about ten days before.

In a few minutes Roger Blakeman arrived at the Radcliffe home, with the information that, on his own initiative, he had for two or three days past, been sending cable-grams to Ketchikan, with instructions to organize a searching party to go overland to Copper Mountain, to locate Richard Radcliffe at the earliest possible time. Blakeman had not communicated with Mrs. Radcliffe, concerning his persistent efforts to find Richard, because he did not wish to bring to her any unnecessary anxiety. He had already in mind that it would be best for him to go to Alaska himself, and he had put his affairs in order so that he could sail on the next boat.

While young Blakeman was discussing these plans with Eleanor and her mother, Mrs. Worthington-Hargreaves came, to express her interest and to offer any resources at her command to assist in the search for her husband's best friend.

Loyola Hargreaves was one of those comforting little women, whose presence anywhere is always a benediction. She was always there, when any one of her friends needed her. She was sweet, charming and earnest — always sympathetic, and sensitive to the wants of others. She was one of those women whom Ruskin might have described as "only

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human insofar as they are sensitive and whose honor is precisely in proportion to their sympathetic sensations.”

It was agreed by all that Blakeman had decided upon the wisest possible course of action, in determining to sail on the Steamer Alameda for Ketchikan.

After Mrs. Hargreaves and Blakeman left the house, Eleanor continued to protest over and over again, because Richard had left home, on so perilous a journey, when she, herself, was in such delicate health. In her nervous excitement, she said things which she did not mean. As a rule, she possessed considerable poise, — that is, that kind of poise which characterizes women who are slow in demonstrating their affections, because of their pride and desire to give the impression of imperviousness.

But now, Eleanor’s self-control had deserted her. Reason gave way to impulse; and she actually censured Richard for his negligence of her and his lack of consideration in leaving her, for any business venture.

Her mother chided her for her impetuosity; but Eleanor kept on talking, with little restraint.

Mother and daughter put in a very troublesome night. Neither of them slept but little, Eleanor declaring when morning dawned that she had not even lost consciousness during the night. Her mother recalled that for a few minutes along towards morning she had heard Eleanor breathing deeply, as if in sound slumber, but Mrs. Fairchild had herself too well in hand to remind Eleanor that she knew she had had a brief nap.

The day which followed was long and tiresome. There was a down-pour of rain. Everything was dark and gloomy, without even one ray of sunshine to relieve the monotony or tediousness of the highly tense situation.

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There was another night of anxiety; but Eleanor and her mother both slept from sheer exhaustion, until about three o'clock in the morning, when they awoke, turned on the lights; made some toast and drank some hot milk.

Early in the forenoon, they talked with Blakeman on the telephone. He was already to sail at eleven o'clock.

A little after nine o'clock, the door-bell rang. Mrs. Fairchild went to the door. There was an Alaska Cable Company messenger boy, who handed her a cable-gram. She opened it nervously, while Eleanor came running down-stairs, as she had seen the boy when he was approaching the house.

Mrs. Fairchild read the message aloud.

KETCHIKAN, ALASKA.

ON WAY TO COPPER MOUNTAIN, ASCENDING STEEP CLIFF THREW MY RIGHT LEG OUT OF JOINT AT KNEE. HAD TO CRAWL EIGHT MILES ON HANDS AND KNEES BEFORE FINDING BOAT WHICH ROWED ME TO COPPER MOUNTAIN. HAVE BEEN LAID UP THERE IN MOUNTAINEER'S CABIN WITH NO COMMUNICATION OUTSIDE WORLD ON ACCOUNT OF STORM. FINISHED WORK AT MOUNTAIN. JUST ARRIVED KETCHIKAN. ALL RIGHT NOW. HOME IN FOUR DAYS. LOVE TO YOU AND MOTHER. RICHARD.

Eleanor and her mother both wept for joy. Then Eleanor said:

“Call up Blakeman right away, because, of course, he won't want to sail now that Richard is all right. I hope that this will be a lesson to all of us. I can tell you one thing, mother, he won't get away from home again on such a wild goose enterprise.”

It wouldn't have been easy for even a keen observer to tell whether the members of Radcliffe's own household or Roger

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Blakeman felt the most happiness at the good news of Richard's safety.

Young Blakeman was a self-made, self-educated young man, who had worked his way through the State University; been admitted to the bar, and then accepted a clerkship in Radcliffe's office, with the idea of some day becoming a junior partner. He was extremely loyal to the highest interests of his employer, and he worked as diligently and conscientiously as though he, himself, were entirely responsible for the success of Radcliffe's practice.

Richard found a hearty welcome, when he arrived home. In her heart, Eleanor was grateful that nothing really serious had happened. She and her mother were both at the steamer to meet him. They had the dinner well under way before they left the house, and they left it in charge of a faithful Swedish girl, whom Eleanor had recently engaged as an all-around maid.

For a long time previous to this, Richard had insisted that Eleanor should have a maid, but she had always protested that it would be foolish; until now, when she had nearly collapsed under the nervous strain of the suspense, due to Richard's misfortune. In any event, she knew that she could not go through the events of the ensuing months, without a servant.

"I didn't mind so much having my leg thrown out of joint as I did worrying you girls, while I was at Copper Mountain. That was a real tragedy; but I had no way of getting any word to you," apologized Richard, as he stepped off the steamer and greeted affectionately Eleanor and her mother, before he grasped warmly Roger Blakeman's hand.

Eleanor felt better about the whole situation, after Richard had explained that the prospects for the development of Cop-

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per Mountain were well worth while, and would no doubt lead to something of important consequences.

“There is no doubt but that there is a very deep vein of copper. I am going to send an expert geologist up there very soon, to make a full report. Some of the samples, which I brought back with me, I showed to a mining engineer at Ketchikan, who pronounced them to be the very highest grade specimens of ductile, malleable, reddish copper,” Richard told Eleanor and her mother and Blakeman, at the dinner table that evening, for Richard had insisted that Blakeman should accompany them home.

“Well, I hope you get something for all your hard work; but I would never again go through all the hardships and worry which I have experienced, for a million tons of copper, or a hundred million barrels of gold,” remarked Eleanor.

“You are very extravagant in your statements,” laughingly answered Richard. “A few tons of copper, or even a barrel of gold or so, would fix things up for us, so that we should never have any material things to worry about.”

“Well, I hope that everything will come out all right; but let the geologists and the mining engineers do the work, because you’re not going to get away from home again on any such pioneering,” said Eleanor emphatically.

In a few days, Eleanor’s mother left for home, and during the following weeks, there was, in a measure, a renewal of the old-time affection between Richard Radcliffe and his wife. Richard was ever thoughtful of her comfort and bestowed upon Eleanor every kindness, of which a big human heart is capable. He provided for all her material wants in such a generous manner, that he continually brought forth from her vehement protests for his extravagance. He anticipated all her needs, and even went so far as to insist that she should

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take an afternoon nap every day, and a drive after luncheon, whenever the weather was favorable.

Richard's tenderness could not help but awaken Eleanor's appreciation and stimulate her to some sense of gratitude; although, most of the time, she was rather colorless in her expressions of thankfulness, and very undemonstrative in her affections. Richard took this all good-naturedly and attributed Eleanor's apparent indifference at times, to the delicacy of her condition.

As the time approached when she should bring to him an heir, his expressions of warmth and demonstrations of tenderness increased. Finally, when the hour of her travail was at hand, and the most experienced physicians and surgeons in Obstetrics were present, to see that there should be no omission, scientific, or otherwise, in the care of Eleanor, Richard assured her that he would not leave the house for several days, — in fact, not until she was perfectly willing that he should return to the affairs of his office.

As the most critical period preceding the birth of her child came upon her, she appealed to the ministering surgeon closest at hand, to increase the amount of ether, — the anaesthetic, which was being used to alleviate her suffering.

Doctor Godfrey shook his head, but Eleanor insisted. Then he turned to the assisting physician, Doctor Bradshaw, who quite agreed with Doctor Godfrey, that it would be impractical and dangerous to the life and vitality of the child, if the mother were to be deprived of any more of her strength, by increasing the amount of the anaesthetic.

Eleanor was so insistent that Doctor Godfrey instructed one of the nurses to consult Mr. Radcliffe. When Richard came in, both Doctor Godfrey and Doctor Bradshaw shook

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their heads meaningly, and Doctor Godfrey whispered to Richard:

“If Mrs. Radcliffe can only make up her mind to endure for a few minutes the intensity of pain which she is now suffering, without the administration of any more ether, both she and the child will come through this splendidly; but if she insists on taking more ether, she will come out all right, of course, but she will not be able to help herself so much and it will really imperil the life of the child. At least, it will depreciate the child’s vitality and strength right at the beginning, when it will need it most. We have said all that we can and we think, perhaps, that if you will speak to her it will make some difference,” concluded Doctor Godfrey

“No, I shall leave it entirely to her; she may do whatever she wishes in the matter,” said Richard, with finality.

Eleanor cried out so appealingly and insistently for the ether, that the physicians administered it;—much against their better judgment.

In a few minutes it was all over. The child, a boy, gave its first cry, as he came into the world, and the first cry proved to be the last one, for he lived only about a half-hour.

When Doctor Godfrey and Doctor Bradshaw entered the waiting room, adjoining Eleanor’s luxurious private suite of rooms in the hospital, Richard sat with his head bowed between his arms,—in deep, silent grief,—reflecting upon the irreparable tragedy, which had just overtaken him, and apparently, a tragedy not of necessity, but a tragedy which had come into his life through Eleanor’s refusal to bear the extreme pangs and excessive physical discomfort during the most crucial moments of child-birth.

CHAPTER V

Their Fifth Anniversary

“**I** THINK I’ll go home for awhile. I’m getting very anxious to see father and mother. I think I’ll plan to stay with them about three months,” said Eleanor to Richard, a few weeks after the death of their infant son.

No one could have been more considerate of another than Richard had been of Eleanor, during her recent illness and convalescence. Notwithstanding all of Richard’s magnanimity, a strange psychological reaction had passed over him. For many weeks he had been thinking many things, which he did not say. His deliberate meditations included numerous sober reflections, concerning the attitude which Eleanor had taken at the time of the baby’s birth. He was beginning to take stock of all that had occurred. Up to this time, during their married life, he had been prone to take more than his just share of responsibility, whenever the relations between him and his wife became at all strained. He had been inclined to blame himself too much. Now, he was beginning to react to all the self-imposed accusations which he had made against himself. He was continually turning over matters in his own mind, without discussing them with any one. If there was any one subject in all the world on which Richard Radcliffe was more reticent than any other, it was that of his married life. He began to feel that he had done everything within his power to lay the foundation for

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happiness and contentment in his marital relations. He justified himself in the belief that he had an innate capacity for loyalty and sustained affection, and that he had bestowed upon his wife, in its virginity, the very flower of his manhood, — the best that was in him to give; — perhaps there were others, he conceded to himself, who would be capable of giving more, — but in his heart of hearts he doubted it. He reviewed the whole situation over and over again. Ever since the baby's death, his demonstrations of affection for Eleanor had lacked something of their former warmth and spontaneity. He certainly was much less effusive than he had been during his early married days, and he had poured out less freely his tenderest emotions toward Eleanor in the last few weeks, than he had during the period preceding the birth of their child. He was undergoing such strenuous, sober second thought, in forming his recent conclusions concerning his matrimonial experience, that he was in a rather receptive mood at the time when Eleanor made the suggestion to him, in regard to her proposed visit to her parents.

“Undoubtedly you will gain your strength back again much more rapidly at home with your mother than you will here, where you have the responsibility of looking after the house. It will do you good to meet all your old friends once more, and to have the opportunity to be with your sisters, after so long a separation. Freida will be able to look after my simple wants. In fact, I think she is a very intelligent girl; — so you won't have to worry about me at all. Besides, I enjoy very much going to the Olympic Club to dine or to lunch. I always meet agreeable associates there, some of whom throw considerable business my way. While you are in the East, I can drop in there, occasionally, for a game of bridge in the evening. I find that it is not a bad idea for a

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lawyer to be able to mix with his comrades in a bridge game. I used to play a good deal at the Fraternity house when I was in the University, and then, too, I played quite often in Washington when I lived there, especially at the Lawyers' Club. Since I came out here I have fallen off somewhat in the fine points of the game, because of lack of practice, but recently, I have played a good many times during the lunch hour, so that I am gradually picking up some of my old-time ability, both in finesse and bidding," concluded Richard.

"Well, but you don't play for money, do you?"

"The losers in the game always pay for the luncheon for the winners," quickly responded Richard.

"But, of course, that is the same as gambling," retorted Eleanor. "I don't think you ought to cheapen yourself by gambling on your ability at cards to pay for your luncheon; — besides, I have always disapproved of the principle of gambling in any form, and I wish you wouldn't do it any more," concluded Eleanor, in a plaintive tone of voice.

"Well, just how would you expect me to spend all my evenings while you are away?" queried Richard.

"Well, certainly not in gambling," replied Eleanor, with emphasis. "I should think, with all the new books that you've been buying during the past few months, that you could find enough to do reading them evenings, while I am gone," she continued.

"No doubt I shall read a great deal, but I see no possible harm in spending an evening now and then, playing bridge for a sufficient stake to add a little interest and spice to the game," he went on.

"Providing it is only now and then, but I still insist that the habit of gambling in any manner is a very pernicious one; and I believe that if you allow yourself to be-

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come absorbingly interested in gambling at bridge or anything else, that it is very likely to win you away from concentrated effort and diligent application to other more worth-while and necessary pursuits, —such as greater knowledge of the law and the highest skill in its practice,” concluded Eleanor, with an air of finality and positive assurance.

“Well, I’ll have to take issue with you there. I think there is no game which will help so much to improve the memory and to increase one’s quickness of perception as bridge; and as for gambling — well, you helped to sell chances on all the home-made articles of finery, which you worked your fingers off to get ready for the Ladies’ Bazaar last spring, didn’t you?”

“Oh, don’t be foolish, Richard. Any dub could see that that is not a parallel case. What has a Ladies’ Bazaar to do with a sensible man’s gambling away his life and time at a Club of men, who are nearly all rich and retired? I wouldn’t think that such a practice by a young man would attract clients, especially, older men, who are sure to notice a lawyer, who in the prime of his young manhood wastes his time and idles away his opportunities, gambling at cards with more experienced men who have already accumulated fortunes,” concluded Eleanor.

“Oh, well, what’s the use of talking about it? Who said that only older men played bridge at the Club? As a matter of fact, a great many of the young men play as much as the older ones. I don’t know what form of amusement you would provide for the mental relaxation of a tired lawyer, worn out at the end of a tedious, trying case at court,” remarked Richard, rather impatiently.

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“Relaxation! Recreation! Why, aren’t there all kinds of sports, such as tennis and golf?”

“Yes, but one can’t indulge in outdoor sports in this abominable weather, and besides, such sports are not played or indulged in at night,” answered Richard, with increasing petulance.

“Well, of course, in the evening one can go to the theatre or motion pictures, or stay at home and enjoy good books,” commented Eleanor.

“Yes, but you don’t approve of hardly any of the amusements or theatrical productions, which are presented here,” interjected Richard.

“Well, of course not. Who wants to spend their time sitting through some highly emotional, over-drawn, tragically exaggerated piece of melodrama, such as one sees nowadays?”

“Then if we eliminate most of the present day motion picture dramas and the average show acted on the legitimate stage, we shall have left only the pastime of sitting at home in the evenings, indulging ourselves in highbrow reading matter, according to your notions,” ejaculated Richard.

“Who said anything about highbrow reading matter? I’m sure I didn’t,” snappily replied Eleanor.

“Well, you don’t like George Ade. You don’t care for Elbert Hubbard, or Irvin Cobb, and I’ve never heard you express much enthusiasm for Mark Twain,” answered Richard, in a tone of voice which indicated that he was on the home stretch of the rebuttal.

“No, I don’t care for any of those writers whom you just mentioned, but there is plenty of literature not to be classified under the caption of highbrow, as you say, which is very entertaining and, at the same time, it is not lacking in

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dignity; while it has something more in it to sustain interest than mere cynicism or humor, at the expense of well-meaning, sensitive people, whose feelings and sensibilities should be regarded by those who lay claim to superior gifts of expression."

"Well, I guess you're right," answered Richard, as he yawned, in a manner which indicated that he was ready to give up the argument.

In about ten days, Eleanor left for her home in the East. The Worthington-Hargreaves family sailed for Europe. Richard had charge of Hargreaves' affairs at home while the latter was abroad.

A short time before, a party of expert engineers and geologists had returned from their investigation of the mine at Copper Mountain. They reported that the copper deposits were very extensive, and that the presence of the product in commercial quantities would be a big thing, not only for the Hargreaves' estate, but for the entire community of Mount Olypmic, which would be the outfitting station for all the commodities which would be sent into Alaska to bring the copper out, and it would be the center of all industrial activities, after the copper was brought out.

Before Hargreaves took passage for Europe, he arranged to leave a substantial sum of money for financing the Copper Mountain Development Company, and he gave to Richard Radcliffe a full Power of Attorney to go ahead with matters.

The chief of the engineering staff, which had just completed its investigations, reported that there was a contiguous vein of copper extending in another direction than did the big deposit at Copper Mountain. It happened, however, that this latter deposit was located on a claim which had been taken up by an Eastern pioneer a few years before. As

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soon as Richard Radcliffe was informed of this, he lost no time in locating the owner, who, fortunately, had come down to Mount Olympic on another business matter. When Radcliffe approached him, in regard to selling his property near Copper Mountain, without reservation of mineral rights, Henry Bevins, who owned the land adjacent to Hargreaves' mine, gave the impression that he was not anxious to sell, but after a good bit of finesse on Radcliffe's part, Bevins became more amenable to the reasoning of his prospective purchaser. Richard made him see that it was an enormous undertaking to capitalize the development of such a project, and that there was always a great element of risk and uncertainty in such matters. Finally, they reached a verbal agreement, in regard to the price for which Bevins' land should be transferred to Hargreaves' estate.

Richard went back to his office, thinking that the matter had been fully settled; but the following day, Bevins returned, with the startling news that he had been offered a larger sum of money by a copper mining promoter, who had been the dominating power in the development of the famous Hecla Mines in Michigan. Richard at once reminded Bevins of his promise of the previous day, but Bevins was evasive and gave Radcliffe to understand that since there was no written contract between them, he did not consider himself bound. At the same time, Bevins assured Radcliffe that he would give him the preference, in the event that Radcliffe would pay the same amount of money as that already offered by the Hecla buyer. Richard asked for twenty-four hours' time, in which to give his decision, which Bevins granted, because the cards were all in his own hands now, and he had only to hold out for the largest possible price which he could get.

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As soon as Richard was free, he made confidential inquiries by wire, through one of his old Fraternity friends, now a banker in Detroit, as to the authenticity of the proposition which Bevins claimed had been made to him. Meanwhile, Radcliffe was negotiating with his own bank, in order to raise a sufficient sum of money for the purchase of Bevins' property. He had already had access to the funds which Hargreaves had left with him for the Development Company, but this sum of money was inadequate for his present purposes. He cabled to Hargreaves, but was unable to locate him through his foreign bankers, who reported that Hargreaves was somewhere in the Lakes of Switzerland.

As soon as the telegram from Richard's Detroit friend arrived, announcing that the offer from the Hecla promoters was a bona fide one, Radcliffe knew that he had to make a quick turn. He took all the available collateral, which he had on hand and went back to the President of the First National Bank of Mount Olympic. This collateral represented not only a big part of the securities which Hargreaves had left in his Safe Deposit Vault, which Radcliffe was authorized to use, but it represented, as well, all the personal securities in stocks and bonds, which Radcliffe had on hand.

The President of the bank, Radford Murdock by name, was more of a pawn-broker than he was a banker. He never failed to take an advantage of a borrower, wherever he could. He had grown rich by freezing out many business men, whose fortunes had taken only a temporarily bad turn. Murdock was one of those men like Shakespeare's Cassius, who had "a lean and hungry look, thinks too much and is dangerous." He was tall, pale, flat-chested, with nervous gray eyes and wrinkled skin. His hands were thin;—wiry and long-fingered.

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Radcliffe did not underestimate the difficulties which he would encounter in securing the loan from Murdock, at a reasonable rate of interest. He knew that Murdock would take all that the law would allow, and that, at best, he could get only a short time loan for such an amount as he required; but, in any event, Radcliffe would be able to make some kind of a turn as soon as he could get into touch with Hargreaves, which would enable him to pay off this obligation at the bank, within thirty or sixty days.

The security which Radcliffe presented to Murdock was gilt-edged in every particular. Finally, he induced the banker to make a loan of two hundred thousand dollars at ten per cent for thirty days, with the confidential understanding that Murdock was to receive a five thousand dollar cash bonus, which he subtracted from the face of the note and took in advance, at the time he made the loan.

Immediately after Radcliffe closed the transaction with Bevins, Richard started for Alaska again, with a party of men who were contemplating becoming stock-holders in the Hargreaves' mine. They spent nearly a month prospecting with a company of engineers, the progress of whose work was impeded by inclement weather. In his calculations, Radcliffe gave himself plenty of time to get back to Mount Olympic before his note at the bank should come due. As a matter of fact, he had put up fifty thousand dollars of his own securities, — all he had in the world, — representing all the money which he had saved by his law practice and accumulated through his investments in Hargreaves' big timber and lumber enterprises.

Radcliffe and his prospecting companions returned to Ketchikan just in time for the out-going steamer on which they had booked reservations; but, to their surprise, the

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ship was late in getting in from Skagway. It had been caught in a dense fog on the way down between Petersburg and Wrangell. This delayed it more than two days, so that the steamer was more than fifty hours late, when it sailed from Ketchikan. Richard was worried, for he knew Murdock to be a hard old tyrant, and what made matters worse, the three days of grace heretofore allowed on promissory notes had been abolished some time before, by an act of the State Legislature.

According to his plans, Richard was prepared to cancel his entire indebtedness at the Bank. Several representative men, who had accompanied him on his recent trip to Alaska, had bought a goodly amount of stock in the copper mine; and besides this, he knew that by this time, additional funds from Hargreaves' New York and European Bankers would be at his disposal as soon as he returned home.

Immediately after the ship was docked at Mount Olympic, at ten o'clock in the morning, after three days' voyage from Ketchikan, Richard made his way up town, with hurried steps, to his office. His faithful clerk, Roger Blakeman, told him at once that the First National Bank had been telephoning to the office.

"Didn't you get my telegram from Ketchikan to pay the note?" queried Richard excitedly.

"Yes, but I had nothing to pay it with," answered Blakeman.

"What? Haven't you had any news from Hargreaves?" questioned Richard, his excitement increasing.

"Only a cable, stating that more money would be here by the middle of this month. Your message to Hargreaves was so delayed in reaching him that he was unable to take action any sooner," replied Blakeman.

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“The middle of the month. Well, today is the fifteenth, so the money should come in today or tomorrow,” said Richard, with rising hopes of meeting the irate Murdock triumphantly.

“Yes, I take it that way,” said Blakeman quietly.

“Did you tell the bank that I was coming home on this boat?” inquired Richard.

“Yes, but that did not seem to satisfy them. They seemed very anxious. It was Mr. Murdock’s secretary telephoning. I am inclined to think that they have taken advantage of you. It wouldn’t surprise me at all if Murdock has sold your securities,” declared Blakeman, “but you know I couldn’t help it.”

“If he’s sold those securities ————— he’ll rue the day he did it,” shouted Radcliffe, as he rushed out of the door.

On Richard’s way to the bank, he stopped for a moment to speak with Curtis Dwyer, a friend of his, who conducted a hardware store on the main street. Then he went on to see Murdock.

As Radcliffe entered the office of the President of the First National Bank, he was conscious of a very chilly sensation in the region of his vertebrae.

“Good morning, Mr. Murdock,” he exclaimed.

The President nodded in a cold, reserved manner, which said in no uncertain terms, “Your delay is unpardonable. What have you to say about it?”

But before Murdock spoke aloud, Radcliffe said, in a quiet, firm tone: “I have come in to pay my note. I am sorry for this little delay, but it was unavoidable, on account of the fogs which delayed our vessel on its way down from Skagway.”

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“Well, of course we couldn’t be expected to make any allowance for that. I waited until yesterday afternoon and then closed out your securities to liquidate the note,” replied Murdock, while he bit his lip nervously.

“You sold those securities in this depressed market, when you knew that everything in stocks and bonds was on the bottom! You sold them, did you? Well, even in this kind of a market you must have obtained a goodly amount in excess of the face of my note, for it was liberally collateralized,” ejaculated Richard.

“No, there was nothing left, after I figured the interest, due the bank, protest charges, and so forth. You know the market is very dull,” concluded the banker, gravely.

Radcliffe knew Murdock so well that he doubted whether so shrewd a bargainer would dispose of such valuable securities at rock-bottom prices. He thought it was more likely that Murdock had tucked the stocks and bonds away in his own vaults and paid the bank the note with his own cash reserves. In any event, Richard did not propose to deal with Murdock in any milk and water fashion. Instead, he looked calmly around the room until he was sure that he was quite alone with the banker.

Then he very coolly took from his pocket a thirty-eight calibre Colt revolver, and said:

“You give me back my securities and let me pay this note, or there’ll be a funeral in this town tomorrow and I won’t ride in the hearse.”

Murdock, in a spirit of cowardly resignation, realizing that his bluff had been called, opened the private safe which stood at the right of his desk, and brought forth the package of securities belonging to Richard Radcliffe.

Radcliffe then took from his pocket his bill-fold, con-

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taining a certified check, which represented the bank roll which had come into his hands from the new stockholders in the Copper Mountain Mine, and some additional bills which he had just borrowed from Curtis Dwyer on his way to the bank, when he stopped to purchase the revolver.

Radcliffe had had no intention of shooting Murdock, for he knew the latter to be one of the biggest cowards on earth; but he had made up his mind that he would have restored to him the hard earned securities, which represented the best efforts of his brain, heart and soul, since he had begun the practice of law.

Radcliffe presented to Murdock the check with which to liquidate the bank-note, which Murdock surrendered to him along with Richard's collateral.

When Richard arose to go, he concluded his interview with Murdock, by saying:

"If you had been born a country boy instead of a city bred man with advantages, you would, no doubt, have turned out to be a bandit of the plains. I have no more respect for you, in spite of your exalted position, than I have for an ordinary train robber or hold-up man. Let it be understood in future that our relations are at an end. I shall close my own account at this bank immediately, and at the same time, I am exercising my authority conferred upon me by a full Power of Attorney to withdraw at this time, also the account of Worthington-Hargreaves. Good-morning, sir."

The exciting events of Radcliffe's visit to Murdock, culminating in the abrupt withdrawal of Worthington-Hargreaves' account, constituted the biggest jolt in Murdock's cold-blooded career, because Hargreaves' father before him had made Murdock President of the First National Bank, and the Hargreaves' bank balance had, for many years, been

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the most substantial factor in carrying the bank along in the early period of its existence. At this very time, Humphrey Worthington-Hargreaves was a prominent director of the bank, and he was always consulted with reference to all important matters, in connection with the affairs of the institution. However Murdock did not know of the Power of Attorney which Hargreaves had issued to Radcliffe before the former sailed for Europe. Neither did he know to what extent Hargreaves' most vital business matters were intertwined with those of Richard Radcliffe. He only knew that Radcliffe had, in recent years, served as attorney for Hargreaves, but Murdock's supreme egotism and highly exaggerated idea of his own importance, had so intoxicated him with a dominating sense of power, that he had over-reached himself in his despicable treatment of Radcliffe.

When Radcliffe returned to his office, after his controversy with Murdock, Blakeman met him with the joyful news that some advices had just come in the foreign mail from Hargreaves, with enclosures of such value that they would serve to cover all of the present obligations of the Copper Mountain Development Company.

"Hereafter, Roger," said Richard, "we will do our banking at the Olympic National Bank, so you may go over and deposit these funds there. I have just transferred our personal account, and also Hargreaves' accounts to that institution."

There was, in Radcliffe's office, a very capable young woman, by the name of Helen Hammond. She had begun her business career as his stenographer, nearly five years before, when he had first opened his law office in Mount Olympic. Miss Hammond was a graduate of the State University and she had supplemented her college training by a course

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of study for one year in Commerce, Accounts and Finance in the School of Business Administration. Her services had proven invaluable to Radcliffe. By this time, she could prepare a brief as well as either Blakeman or Radcliffe.

The business of the office had increased so greatly during the past two years, that Miss Hammond now acted as personal secretary to Radcliffe, who had given her an assistant, who served as general stenographer.

Miss Hammond took as much interest in Richard Radcliffe's career as it is possible for any woman to have in the success of her employer. She was inordinately ambitious for him;—not only that he should win every case, which was put into his hands, but also, that he should achieve a place of importance in the financial world. More than this, she entertained for him, certain political aspirations, and she had often urged him to go into politics, after he had accumulated a sufficient fortune to remove him from the possible slanders and temptations of public life.

Indeed, Miss Hammond's interest in Richard Radcliffe had been more of an inspiration to him, than he liked to admit. He was always glad to talk with her, because she always had something worth while to say and to suggest. Her confidence in Radcliffe's ability had served as no small incentive to his present list of achievements.

When he was alone, he often found himself secretly wishing that his wife had some of Miss Hammond's understanding. He recalled the time when he had prepared to argue the demurrer in his first case for Lem Simpkins. He had talked it all over with Miss Hammond and she had given him much valuable information, concerning the mental processes of the Prosecuting Attorney, Robert Dunne, so that Radcliffe had been able to anticipate just about what Dunne

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would do. Then, there was the memorable case of Red Feather Alki, for the trial of which Radcliffe had worked day after day and night after night, with Miss Hammond always at his right hand, to help him to assemble facts, which would bring out the necessary evidence to prove the innocence of his client. After that, there had been the case of the Widow Gaylord, who had found it necessary to break the will of her husband, who had attempted to cut her off with little, and to leave the bulk of his fortune to the children of his first wife. It happened that Miss Hammond knew the family history of the Gaylords so well, that she was able to put Radcliffe in possession of such important facts, that it made it much easier for him to establish the widow's just claims.

And so matters had gone on. There was the case of Mr. Avery, the ship-builder, who had been almost ruined by the failure of some big contractors to deliver materials to him at the time agreed upon. Radcliffe won Avery's case and secured a large sum of money for Mr. Avery for this breach of contract, but he knew in his own mind that he could never have accomplished this, had it not been for Miss Hammond's unstinted assistance for many evenings of over-time work before the case came to trial. And, ever since Hargreaves' affairs had been managed so skilfully by Radcliffe, Miss Hammond had kept her ever vigilant eye keenly alert to all the details bearing upon the successful management of the enterprises of the capitalist, who had placed his most important business matters in her employer's hands.

In fact, Miss Hammond had refused to take a vacation for the last two years, because she had never seen a time when she could "safely get away," as she expressed it. Her strenuous tasks were already beginning to tell upon her.

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Radcliffe and Blakeman had both insisted that she needed a rest, and Richard had himself suggested, that she should either go East, or take a trip to California, at the expense of the office. Miss Hammond had only said, in response to these proposals: "We'll wait and see. I'll do it later when things clear up a little."

About two months after Radcliffe had returned from his recent trip to Alaska, he was dictating to Miss Hammond a lengthy report for the stockholders of the Copper Mountain Development Company, when all of a sudden, her pencil refused to work. She fainted and fell from her chair before Radcliffe could rescue her. The other girl in the office soon came to Miss Hammond's assistance, with a camphor bottle. Miss Hammond rallied, but Radcliffe insisted that she should go home at once. He felt conscience-stricken that he had been so careless as to permit Miss Hammond to go so far beyond her strength. He immediately summoned a closed car and told her that he was going to take her home himself, remarking as he did so: "And then I'll know you're there. Don't dare show up at this office again until you have had a good rest at home and a vacation trip so far away that you can't hear anything about what's going on here."

No sooner had Richard left the office with Miss Hammond, than a telegram for him was delivered, which Roger Blakeman opened. It read:

MEET ME TWO FORTY FIVE TRAIN TODAY ELEANOR.

"It's two-thirty now, so he won't be able to make it," remarked Blakeman to the stenographer, "I'd go myself only I have this contract, which must go out on the three-fifteen mail, and I must take it to the post-office. Besides,

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Mrs. Radcliffe will find her way home all right and I shouldn't know exactly how to explain the situation to her. Better let Radcliffe do that himself, I guess. It's hard to make explanations for another man and the more I see of married men, the better satisfied I am that I am a bachelor. I feel like the priest who said to his clerical brother: 'Commend a wedded life; but keep thyself a bachelor','' concluded Blakeman, who took every opportunity that he could to prove that he was on the defensive, when he was talking to little Miss Jinks, the petite, dainty, little girl, who was Miss Hammond's assistant, and who spent a good deal of her time primping and applying the contents of her vanity case, when she wasn't reading the *Echoes of Screenland*, or when she thought no one was observing her.

"Well, you needn't worry, for I don't want to marry you. I'm going into the movies," Miss Jinks assured Blakeman, with a self-satisfied air. This, too, when it will be remembered that the movies were in the early stages of their modern development.

Blakeman hurriedly folded the contract, placed it in the envelope, put on his hat, and started for the post-office.

Just as he was going out the door, a fashionably dressed blonde woman entered the office. She inquired for Mr. Radcliffe, but Miss Jinks informed her that he was out and would not be back for perhaps, an hour.

"Yes, I saw him driving with Miss Hammond in a limousine, about half an hour ago; but I thought surely he'd be back by this time. He's settling my father's estate. I'm Mrs. Robert Compton. I live next door to Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe. Do you know when Mrs. Radcliffe is coming home?" queried the busy Mrs. Compton, who never missed

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a trick when it came to gathering news, concerning her friends or friends' friends.

Miss Jinks, who lacked Miss Hammond's discretion in such matters, replied:

"Yes, she's coming home on the two-forty-five train today. We just had a telegram, but Mr. Radcliffe won't be able to go to meet her because Miss Hammond was just taken ill in the office. She had a fainting spell and Mr. Radcliffe didn't want to send her home alone, so he went with her. Dear me, I hope she didn't faint again on the way home."

Edith Compton was secretly delighted at this little piece of news. She had always envied Eleanor Radcliffe her ideal husband, because Robert Compton was a very different kind of man, who played with life very recklessly and gave his wife little of his time or attention, so that she was obliged to amuse herself with piffling pink teas, and other society functions, to which she was not altogether averse, but at the same time, she would have enjoyed a little more of her dashing husband's devotion and companionship.

"Well, it's just two forty this minute," exclaimed Mrs. Compton. "If I hurry I can meet Mrs. Radcliffe at the train myself. She'll be ever so sorry to hear of Miss Hammond's misfortune, I know, and I can just as well take Mrs. Radcliffe home in my own car."

Mrs. Compton lost no time in directing her chauffeur to hurry to the railroad station.

The train was just on time.

"What's happened to Richard?" inquired Eleanor, almost out of breath, when she saw Edith Compton.

"Nothing at all. Not a thing," positively asserted Edith.

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"Yes there has, I know there has. Tell me the worst, the very worst," insisted Eleanor, interrupting her.

"Nothing, only Miss Hammond was taken ill in the office and Richard was afraid to let her go home alone, so he went with her," explained Mrs. Compton, while she watched Eleanor's face, to try to read her expression of utter disappointment when she learned that her husband was more interested in looking after the comfort of some other woman than he was in meeting his own wife at the train, after an absence of more than three months.

But in spite of Eleanor's impetuosity, she was too proud to admit her feelings to Edith Compton, so she merely said:

"Well, it was very kind of you to come to meet me. Of course Richard knew that if he couldn't come himself, that I would prefer to have you," said Eleanor, smilingly.

"O, he didn't send me to meet you. I just happened in his office to consult him about some matters in connection with father's estate, and the stenographer told me that he had gone to take Miss Hammond home and wouldn't be able to meet you. It seems they had just received the telegram announcing your arrival."

"Well, it must have been terribly delayed then, because I sent it more than three hours ago. I just happened to think that there was a possible chance that Richard would not have received the letter which I sent him the night before I left Washington. I mailed it that evening, but it is quite possible that it did not reach here ahead of me, although mother assured me it would, if I posted it in the box by our house," concluded Eleanor.

"I suppose, perhaps, you may be too tired to stop down town for tea. If you are, we'll go right home, but if not, we'll stop at Murray's," suggested Mrs. Compton.

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“No, I think I’d better be going on home. I’m getting anxious to see just how Freida has taken care of things,” answered Eleanor.

As soon as Eleanor was alone, she began to reflect seriously, on the meaning of Richard’s conduct. Why should he take Miss Hammond home? Couldn’t Miss Jinks have done this? Or Blakeman? In fact it would have been better if Richard had summoned a physician, or sent for Miss Hammond’s mother. What did Richard mean by not coming to meet her? Surely the telegram or letter must have reached him about noon. Eleanor determined that she would find out more about his relations with Miss Hammond. She could not believe that they were anything more than Platonic; but still, men were men, she thought.

In the midst of her reflections, the telephone rang. It was Richard.

“Hello, dear,” he said.

“Well! Is that you?” she responded.

“You don’t know how sorry I am that I was not able to get to the station to meet you. I was out of the office for a little while and did not get your telegram until just this minute, when I came in. The postman has just brought your letter, too. I hope you’re all right. Are the folks in Washington all well?”

“Yes, they’re all right. When are you coming home?” inquired Eleanor. She was too true to her breeding and traditions to open up any unpleasantness in a telephone conversation.

“Oh, I’ll be there right away. Just as soon as I can drive the car home. Good-bye,” replied Richard.

There was a shadow of reserve in Eleanor’s eyes, when Richard kissed her, as soon as he entered the house. There

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was a proudish curve on her lips, after she returned his kiss, half-heartedly. Then she said:

“If you’re more interested in looking after Miss Hammond’s comfort than you are in coming to meet me, when I have been away from home for so long, I would like to have you, at least, take the pains to instruct your other stenographer not to reveal the fact to outsiders. I was quite humiliated to have Edith Compton meet me at the train with such a piece of news. I know that she just gloated in it. You evidently have become much devoted to Miss Hammond during my absence,” she said in a hurt tone.

“Now, don’t be foolish. You know what a faithful worker Miss Hammond has always been. She looks out for that office and for my interests as no one else in the world could do, or would do, if they could. Naturally, I was very uneasy about her when she collapsed today. I don’t know how I should get along without her. I wanted to see her in safe hands and properly taken care of, before I left her, because she’s made herself sick over-working for me. You know she’s been with us five years now, the first of next month, ever since I opened my first office,—just a hole in the wall in the Beekman Building.”

“Yes, I guess she’s been with you too long. There are lots of other girls who would do just as well, or even better, than she.

“She’s too nervous for her work anyway. I’ve noticed it for more than a year. Besides, I don’t like the foolish idea which you have just expressed,—that you can’t get along without her, and that she’s indispensable to you. That’s all nonsense. I want you to get rid of her right away,” concluded Eleanor, in a voice which indicated clearly, that she meant what she said.

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“I’ll do nothing of the kind! I wouldn’t think of such a thing! What! Discharge Miss Hammond, after all these years of loyalty and hard work? Why you must be crazy!” ejaculated Richard, in a disgusted tone.

“No, I mean exactly what I say. You must get rid of her. I don’t intend to stand for this,” replied Eleanor, her voice rising.

“There is no woman in the world, not even you, who can tell me what I **MUST** do,” responded Richard firmly.

“All right, I’ll go back to Washington,” answered Eleanor.

“Well, you can do just as you like about that, too. I’ve been looking forward to your coming home. I hoped to get much happiness out of seeing you again. It’s in your power to make our home either very happy or very miserable, and if you choose to make it happy, I want you to stay right here, but if you choose to make it miserable, I certainly don’t want you to stay here,” concluded Richard, with a decisiveness in his speech and manner which Eleanor had never before witnessed.

Then Richard took from his inside coat pocket a long, black cigar, which he lighted and began to smoke, while he ostensibly read the evening paper.

“So you’ve taken to smoking in the house, while I’ve been away, have you?”

“Yes, I added that little luxury to my limited list of domestic privileges,” replied Richard sarcastically.

“I detected the smell of smoke the moment that I entered the house. Of course, by this time all the sofa pillows, upholstering, rugs, bedding and clothing have become saturated with tobacco fumes. I suppose they are all utterly ruined. If you insist upon smoking in the house, why, the only thing

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to do is to partition the sun-room and make a den, where you can indulge yourself in the tobacco habit, to which you have evidently become a slave, during my absence," commented Eleanor.

"No, if it is necessary to tear down, or rebuild the house, in order to have a little comfort in it, I will dismiss the idea of comfort," remarked Richard, in a tone of finality.

"Well, you used to take a walk, or sit out on the porch, whenever you wanted to smoke," said Eleanor.

"Yes, I know that I used to do that, but while you were away, I grew tired of chasing myself out-doors every time when I felt like enjoying myself, and so, I made up my mind that I would give myself a few special privileges for awhile. Now, I don't feel like giving them up, especially since I slave away all the time at the office to keep up a home. I am beginning to feel that I have a right to enjoy the home for which I provide. I am perfectly willing that you should indulge yourself in any pastime or luxury which you wish, and I think that you should permit me the same liberty and indulgence.

"You don't realize the strain I am under constantly; it is tremendous; the only thing which I seem to be able to do to relieve my nervous tension is to smoke; that soothes my nerves, and temporarily, diverts my thoughts from the seriousness of my work," concluded Richard.

"I think you take both your law practice and business, too seriously," replied Eleanor.

"Possibly, but I must take things seriously during the early years of my practice, if I expect to achieve any marked degree of distinction."

"What sort of distinction do you mean?" inquired Eleanor.

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“Why a big reputation, — a prestige in my profession, which will put me in a class by myself; — but I want to win this reputation entirely upon my own merits. I am willing to work hard, as I have always done. I not only want to become known as the best lawyer in this state, but I want to deserve to be known as one of the leading lawyers of the United States, and I can do it, too, if I keep on as I have begun, in the first few years of my practice,” concluded Richard, in a tone of determination.

“I can’t see any sense in being just a sensational advertiser; — in just being known. If a man has enough to keep him busy and makes sufficient money to warrant him a comfortable old age, I can not see what else he should want,” commented Eleanor.

“No, you don’t understand exactly what I am striving for. Maybe you’re right, though, in your opinion that a moderate degree of success should satisfy a man. I am not temperamentally constituted, as you are. I can not be contented by placing any limitations upon myself, because I believe myself capable of going just as far in achievement, as any other man in my profession,” concluded Richard, while he continued to puff away on his choice Havana cigar.

While Richard was discussing, or rather trying to discuss with his wife, the possibilities of his future career, he was making many mental reservations associated very closely with his many conversations with Helen Hammond.

Recently, Miss Hammond had been talking to him, more than ever, about the splendid future which she believed lay before him. She had often told him that he should become a Judge in the Federal Courts, and that if he were to go ahead and make this goal, he would some day be singled out and appointed to the United States Supreme Court bench.

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“Or, if you think you would prefer political preferment,” she had said, “you ought to begin to lay your plans to become a candidate for either the House of Representatives or the United States Senate.

“No one has a better gift for making friends and keeping them. You have the ability to organize men and women. You make a very fiery speech, based upon facts, and a sure ethical foundation, and you know how to illuminate your discourse by flashes of wit and humor, which make your delivery very magnetic; — so there is no reason why you shouldn’t go as far as you like,” concluded Helen Hammond, one day when a discussion had arisen in the office as to the merits and abilities of prospective candidates for Congress.

All these encouraging suggestions from Helen Hammond helped to accentuate Richard Radcliffe’s self-confidence. Radcliffe had never been conceited. He lacked the attributes of egotism, which most men acquire if they are fortunate in winning early success. He had poise. He had common sense. Every bit of his self-confidence was justified by the measure of his splendid abilities. He had missed, from the beginning of his married life, the stimulus to his ambition, which he had always imagined that his wife would bring to him. During his courtship of Eleanor, she had fed his vanity in another way, by telling him often about his good looks, distinguished bearing and polished manners. He was so young then that all her praise of his personal appearance had flattered him and kept him in good humor; but since it had been necessary for him to struggle more, in the face of keen competition, to win recognition in a new pioneer country, he needed more encouragement and inspiration in his strenuous endeavors to achieve a superlative degree of

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success, and to make an individual place for himself, in keeping with his aspirations.

On the day after her return home, while Eleanor was going about the house, setting some things to right, which Freida had neglected, she began to reflect on the incidents, which had followed her arrival, on the preceding day.

Freida had told her that Richard had dined frequently at the Olympic Club, during her absence; that he had spent very few evenings at home. This piece of news had agitated Eleanor considerably. She wondered whether he had really spent so much time at the Club, or had he been giving some of his attention to Helen Hammond. After all, she reasoned, Richard had always told her the truth. She had absolute confidence in his veracity and integrity. As she continued to think matters over, she came to the conclusion that all he had said to her concerning his interest in Miss Hammond vibrated with sincerity. She felt quite sure, in her own mind, that she had misjudged him; — that she had been too hasty and impulsive in insisting that he should discharge Miss Hammond from his employ; — so she decided that she would say no more about this. As to Richard's smoking in the house, she would call his attention to this again, when he was in more amiable mood than on the previous evening, because it was most offensive to her, that he should continue to make a fumatory out of the house, which she had spent so much time to decorate and beautify.

It occurred to Eleanor that the day of the fifth anniversary of her wedding would soon be at hand. She looked at the calendar. It was the following day. It would be a good time to make amends, she thought, for whatever little error she might have been responsible for, in her hasty remarks to Richard the day before. She conceded to herself that

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she had been a little too impulsive; but at the same time, she had a way of always justifying herself in any course of action. She felt confident of her own worthiness. She believed herself deserving of the attentions and earnest devotion of Richard. In fact, she thought, in her soberest moments, that she was really a much better wife to him than he was husband to her. She had retained this illusion, during her entire married life, because he had always been so indulgent and tolerant of her capricious moods, especially up to the time that their baby was born. Eleanor was conscious, in a way, that Richard had not been exactly the same, since the death of their infant son; but she attributed this change in him to his grief over the loss of their baby. She never for one instant accused herself of having been in the least degree selfish in choosing for herself the easiest possible circumstances at the time of the child's birth. It never occurred to Eleanor that she should ever sacrifice herself for anything or anybody in the world.

She had an indomitable pride, however, and she knew in her own mind that she would not suffer the humiliation of losing Richard's affections to another woman for anything in the universe. She would guard against that always. She knew that Richard had first been attracted to her because of her good looks, her style and her extreme neatness in her wearing apparel and personal appearance. She would continue to hold Richard's interest, she thought, by that same natural beauty, tidiness of person and trimness in her wardrobe, which had first appealed to him. She admitted to herself, reluctantly, that instead of growing closer together as husband and wife, they were growing, to a degree, farther apart. But then, she concluded, that this was no doubt the case with all marriages, — at least, with ninety-nine out of a

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hundred. What is the use, she thought, of keeping one's romantic enthusiasm at white heat all of the time? It would be too hard work. It was better anyway to maintain a certain reserve with her husband, so that he should never feel that he completely possessed and dominated her body and soul. She would, however, make a special effort to commemorate their fifth anniversary.

With Freida's assistance, she would prepare the best dinner that she had ever cooked and served, since they had kept house. And she did. There was nothing lacking in flavor, or delicacy, or quality, in this well-balanced, well-cooked meal. A fruit cocktail, made of the best and choicest pineapple, cantaloupe, oranges and berries, was first served. This was followed by a tender, well-roasted turkey, with sage and nut dressing, hot mashed potatoes, turkey gravy, corn on the cob, and combination salad. The dessert was baked Alaska, the first which Eleanor had ever attempted to make; but Freida had explained to her that the woman by whom she had formerly been employed, had an excellent recipe for preparing this unusual dish. Freida had copied this formula, which Eleanor followed so carefully, with Freida's advice, that the result was very successful. After the dessert was served, there were pecan meats, coffee and after dinner mints.

Richard almost wished that their wedding anniversary might come oftener, if it were to be accompanied by such feats of culinary skill.

Just as the coffee was being served, a late delivery wagon stopped at the Radcliffe residence, and a boy hurriedly delivered a large, pasteboard box at the back door.

Eleanor knew that she had not been shopping that day, outside of the general market places, and when the package

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was delivered she surmised that it was something which Richard had ordered. But she did not attempt to open it until he said:

“Something for you, my dear; open it whenever you are ready.”

Eleanor cut the knot in the string and when she opened the box, there was a marvellous creation of cream lace and pink chiffon.

“Why this is the loveliest, most exquisite gown, I have ever had! How thoughtful of you! I shall be able to keep it for a long time. I go to so few places where a costume of this kind is required.”

“Now, that is exactly why I bought it for you, because I want you to accompany me more to evening dinners and entertainments,” suggested Richard.

“Well, we’ll see about that and talk it over later, when the winter ‘season’ starts. You know society does not interest me as much as it does you. You like to meet people better than I do. In fact, dinner parties generally bore me. I like to go to the theatre better, especially to good plays. I do hope that there will be some worth-while dramas presented here during the coming winter. When the plays aren’t good, there isn’t much for me to do evenings, except to read. I brought home some good books with me from the East, — some of Ibsen’s plays and some of Maeterlinck’s works.”

“I like Maeterlinck; I have never read Ibsen. I have such a hard year’s work ahead of me that I think I shall have to relax a little, in my reading at home. I think I’ll take up some lighter books, — some detective stories and such like,” remarked Richard.

“I never could see for the life of me what any one could get out of reading that kind of trash. It seems perfectly

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inane to me. There is plenty of reading matter which is entertaining, without resorting to such impossible stories," replied Eleanor.

"Well, we're not going to read anything at all tonight. Several days ago, I noticed that Madame Raymeyer was going to give a concert here tonight; so I decided that if you came home, I would get tickets for it, for our anniversary evening, — just to give you a little surprise. I was fortunate in securing two of the best seats in the house, because the box office manager happened to be one of my clients. I defended his son, after one of his youthful escapades. There is plenty of time; but not much to spare, after we finish dinner," concluded Richard.

"Well, you've surprised me all right. In fact, you're the last man on earth that I would ever have dreamed would buy tickets for such an event; because you're not especially fond of music, and you never did such a thing before in your life. Of course, I'm delighted to go," responded Eleanor, with more enthusiasm than she had indicated about anything for more than a year.

"I want you to wear your new gown tonight," suggested Richard; just as he was consuming his second plate of baked Alaska.

When Eleanor had completed her toilette, she looked the prettiest, — the best, Richard thought, that he had seen her look for two years.

"You are very pretty tonight," he said. "I am very proud of you, and in the future, I want your costumes to reflect the increased prosperity which has come to me, and to represent, as they should, my financial standing in the community. It is true that during the first few years of our married life it has been necessary, at times, for you to

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economize somewhat; but I have had a rattling good year, — and I want people, from now on, to take notice that I am here and here to stay; and I want your appearance in every way to bespeak my success. I don't want you to deprive yourself of anything which will add to your beauty or enhance your charms," he added.

"Very well, dear, that is very good of you, but I must remind you that we have need to make haste, or we shall be late for the concert," replied Eleanor.

When Richard and Eleanor arrived at the door of the Kringle Theatre, Richard put his hand in the inside pocket of his evening clothes to get the tickets.

Suddenly, he ejaculated, with a tone of intense provocation:

"I haven't my tickets! Why didn't you remind me to take them from my office clothes? You knew very well that I brought them home. Now, I shall have to drive the car back home and get them."

"Of course I never dreamed but that you would remember them; you have such a wonderful memory. In fact, I saw you take them out of the pocket of your blue serge suit; but it never occurred to me that you would forget them."

"Well, I must have laid them down, with the idea of putting them in my bill-fold later. No doubt, I left them on the dresser. Well, I'll hurry and get back just as soon as I can. You wait in the parlor here on the first floor, and I will come there for you," concluded Richard, as he hurried away.

After his return, Richard was really in very good humor, and enjoyed the program much more than he had anticipated. He knew that he was giving Eleanor an artistic, musical treat. It had been in his heart all day to give himself entirely

Their Fifth Anniversary

over to her entertainment that evening. He had succeeded and his efforts were seemingly appreciated to a greater degree than they had been on other previous anniversaries. Perhaps it was because of the mental reaction, which had come to Eleanor during her reflections about all that had occurred on the day when she came home.

That evening was a becoming, fitting, fifth anniversary. Would they be able from now on to live in harmony and concord, with the same loving spirit which had filled this occasion?

CHAPTER VI

Their New Home

“WELL, how do you think you’re going to like it?” queried Richard of Eleanor, as they sat by the fireplace, at the beginning of the first evening in their new fourteen room sandstone house, which they had built about eight years after their marriage.

“Oh! very well, I guess. Of course, it is going to be much harder work to look after this place. The rooms are so much larger than they were in our cottage,” answered Eleanor.

“Well, so far as that is concerned, you can just as well have another maid. Freida is so accustomed to your ways of doing things, after all these years, that she would be perfectly capable of breaking in and training a second girl,” suggested Richard.

“No, I prefer to try to get along with only Freida. It is very difficult to get two domestics who will work together peaceably. Besides, no second girl whom we could hire would ever take care of my linen and silver and furniture and rugs and bric-a-brac as I do. I just have to look after those things myself.”

“Yes, I understand that, and you make yourself a slave to those things. You devote as much time to the care of these dead, inanimate pieces of Chippendale furniture; these Oriental rugs, and marble statuettes and bronze figurines, as

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a keeper of a museum would give to a rare and costly collection of curios and relics.

“You’ve added so much to all these things of late, that I’m almost afraid your life in this new house will be a burden, unless you get another servant. There are plenty of Swedish girls in this city, who would be glad to work for you.”

“No, they would make me more work than they could accomplish. Besides, they would never learn to take care of my antiques. That requires some one who understands the value of such things and who knows how to handle them carefully.”

“Yes, I guess you’re right. It isn’t an extra maid which you need so much as it is a curator, — a professional curator of a domestic museum, so that you can be free to enjoy your new home. If you could only make up your mind to discontinue your work, as a custodian of all these antiques, and become just a simple home-keeper, I think you would be much happier in this new house,” suggested Richard.

“It’s all very well for you to talk, because you don’t know what you’re talking about. I would not surround myself by artistic things if I did not intend to give them artistic attention.

“My aesthetic tastes would forbid me any negligence of my responsibilities toward objects of art. That is a part of my business just as pleading is a part of yours,” commented Eleanor.

The new Radcliffe residence was an architectural model, which constituted a real adornment to the finest residential section in the suburbs of Mount Olympic.

It stood on a hill, overlooking Puget Sound. It afforded a bird’s-eye view of many islands and all the towering peaks and snow-covered ranges of the Cascades and Olympics. To

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the North could be seen Mount Baker, with its covering of white softened and subdued by the sun's glow, until it resembled a huge pink cameo against a background of rugged grandeur. To the Southeast was Mount Rainier, a magnificent towering cone, Nature's greatest monument on the American continent. On the West were the Olympics with outstanding Mount Olympus, superior to the Olympus of Thessaly, but like the Grecian legend, fit for the abode of the gods and the Great Spirits.

Such was the setting of the Radcliffe home, at Twenty-Three Arbor Court, on Magnolia Drive.

There was an outside stair-way leading to the flat roof over the dining-room, which gave the house a distinctive touch. A well-known architect, by the name of Ryder, had drawn plans for the house, in consultation with an interior decorator, who had had much experience in both Paris and New York. Eleanor had offered many suggestions, both to the architect and the decorator, who had given her credit for unusual artistic taste, and the ability to express it with the discrimination of a connoisseur.

The main entrance and hall were on the north side of the house, which left the southern exposure for the living-rooms which were all open to the sunlight.

In the sun-parlor, which led from the house to the garden, there was a most unusual scheme of decorating, carried out by delicately painted butterflies in bas-relief. The exquisite semblance of these summer pleasure-seekers flying about the plastered walls, and the enchanting view of the gardens from the long plate glass windows, made one almost feel that he was enjoying two gardens instead of one. There was a long crestwood rug, a closely woven fabric, in bright cheerful colors, which harmonized with the draperies and furniture covers of

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brilliantly patterned linens with warm yellow backgrounds. The floor was of deep gray and white tile.

In the library was an antique, Chippendale mantel, which harmonized with the soft brown velvet draperies and upholstering of the mahogany furniture. There was a deep fire-place built of sandstone, underneath the mantel.

The reception room and parlor were in walnut panelings, with furnishings of the same kind of wood of the best design and workmanship.

In the dining-room the scenic walls were painted in landscapes covered with trees and open spaces dotted by pergolas, which formed a background of particular charm and individuality. The furniture was Queen Anne in style, painted to be in harmony with the general setting.

The dining-room afforded another view of the garden entirely different from the views to be seen from the sun-parlor. Here could be seen the wistaria arbor, surrounded by Dorothy Perkins roses, shady maples in the background, water-lilies and golden day lilies. This wealth of flowers was at the right of the splashing Florentine fountain, which could be seen from the end windows of the sun-room.

There was a combination suite of rooms, consisting of a sitting-room and two bed-rooms, each with a private bath. These rooms had been set aside for Eleanor and Richard. Eleanor's boudoir was artistically interesting in elusive tones of gray-green and rose. The paneled walls of the sitting-room were accented by decorative pastoral paintings, and the graceful, carved chaise-lounge was finished in green-gold. There was a contrasting note in the fine old desk of Marqueterie which belonged to Eleanor, and the old Florentine cabinet with concealed small compartments on either side,

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which was used by Richard whenever he had occasion to file away newspaper clippings, or to do any writing at home.

There were three guest chambers, with private baths, furnished in bird's-eye maple, cameo enamelled white wood, and polychrome mahogany, — each with decorations which constituted an artistic and individual setting.

But with all the beauty which was a part of this newly made home and its surroundings, there was a noticeable absence of freedom in its use and enjoyment. This atmosphere of restraint established itself immediately, — just as soon as Richard and Eleanor had taken possession of the place.

In the chairs, divan and davenport of the library, there were cushions and pillows made of soft satins, Poiret silk and French linen.

Richard Radcliffe would have enjoyed reposing his tired head on any one of these pillows; but there was a certain indefinable something in his wife's face, — a thought unspoken, — unexpressed, but nevertheless, emphatically and assuredly there, which denied him this measure of self-indulgence.

The pillows always looked inviting, but that was all there was to it, so far as Richard Radcliffe's personal comfort was concerned. He never dared, in his own house, take any liberties which were unauthorized by his precise and particular wife. It was true that he had continued to smoke occasionally at home, ever since Eleanor's last visit to Washington, but now that they were living in their new home, Eleanor had stated in no uncertain terms, that she did not intend to have all her fine new things saturated by tobacco fumes. Richard had not argued the matter with her, but he had reserved to himself the intention to begin smoking again in their new residence either sometime when Eleanor was off her guard, occupied elsewhere with her domestic duties, or else, when

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Hargreaves should come to call on them, as Richard well knew that Eleanor would not express her displeasure in the presence of guests.

Richard's restrained surroundings in his own house were in entire contrast with the privileges which had been his back in his old Indiana home, where five brothers and two sisters had been reared with entire freedom, in a large, spacious, old-fashioned dwelling, with huge front and back door-yards, — an orchard and garden attached. Here the Radcliffes had lived an unrestrained life, so far as healthful recreation and amusement were concerned.

For the past three years, Richard had been accustomed to dine at the Olympic Club about every other evening. This gave him an opportunity to play bridge with his business associates. In fact, he had become an expert at this game, so that he was known as one of the best players on the Pacific Coast.

"A man who plays bridge as Hargreaves plays it, shows an evidence of a well-balanced mind; but a man who plays as Radcliffe plays, well, — that is a sure sign of a mis-spent youth," said old Doc Witherill, one day when they were winding up a game at the Olympic Club. They had been playing for only one half a cent a point; — but Radcliffe had won about thirty dollars. He had started the last hand by bidding two spades, which had been followed by a three heart and a four diamond bid. Richard had then said four no-trumps, and wound up with complete control of all the leads, by finessing cleverly through the dummy and his own hand until he made a grand slam.

While Eleanor did not approve of Richard's dining at the Club so frequently, at the same time, she was unwilling to

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bestow the hospitality of her home upon her husband's business associates.

"Home should not be a place to discuss business. It introduces too much of the commercial element and desecrates the finest traditions of those who wish to maintain the best social standards.

"Such a practice as bringing home one's business friends is sure to result in a certain wear-and-tear on the furniture, rugs and linen. Such things are very expensive and it costs a great deal to meet the over-head of renewing household furniture and supplies. Such extravagances in hospitality are not conducive to thrift; and besides, it means too much extra work and responsibility for the head of the house," Eleanor had said to Richard, when he had suggested that it was necessary for him to spend much time at the Club, unless he could bring his friends home for a little social diversion, while they discussed casually, business matters.

"I can't see why men want to mix their social affairs with their business. I should think that an office would be the proper place to talk business," remarked Eleanor to Richard, while they talked over Richard's methods of meeting and talking with people, who could be of some assistance to him in his profession.

"Well, you would understand better about those things if you were either a business or a professional man; but since you are not, why don't you leave such matters to my judgment?

"So far as I am concerned, I am perfectly willing to entertain my friends at the Club. It works out very well. I don't have to worry about ruining any furniture, or soiling any fancy work. It suits me perfectly, so don't worry about it," Richard had replied.

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It was no unusual occurrence now for Richard to telephone home, in advance of the dinner hour, that it would be quite impossible for him to get home. Usually he made the excuse that some business acquaintances from out of town had just arrived; or that some important, pending, local matter required final settlement that evening. He would generally add to his telephone conversation, the explanation that the nature of the matters to be discussed was so technical, that it would be out of the question to include the wives of the men interested; or else, some ethical questions were involved, which could not well be approached with any outsiders present.

Eleanor had been impressed with the fact that if Richard's professional practice was increasing in proportion to the number of excuses which he gave for entertaining men at the Club, he would by this time have been obliged to enlarge his staff of clerks and rent an entire floor, in order to carry on his business.

In one of her letters to her mother, she had said:

"I think it best, however, not to remonstrate with Richard about taking his friends to the Club. He must pay his share of the Club dues anyway, — like the other members, and since he must meet this obligation, he is entitled to the unlimited privileges of the Club."

Eleanor had concluded that the expense of dining Richard's friends at the Club was probably less, when everything was taken into account, than it would be if he were to bring them home. If they were to entertain, to any extent, at home, it would be necessary for her to employ another servant. Thus far, she had been able to take care of their new home, with only the assistance of Frieda, and, by having an extra woman helper come two days a week to do the laundry work.

Eleanor believed that she was performing her whole duty,

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by keeping her home spotless and herself well-groomed and immaculate. There was no reason, she thought, why she should transform their house into a rendezvous for Richard's men associates.

By the time that they had been married fourteen years, the last six years of which had been spent in their luxurious, sandstone house, Eleanor had settled down to a quiet acceptance of life, which was rather an uninteresting humdrum, — prosaic and commonplace, to say the least. She continued to read all the latest books, which she considered worth reading, and she still did enough fancy work to stock a well equipped art store.

Even when Richard was at home, he seemed to prefer to spend much of his time alone, either in the library, where he read the newspapers, or on one of the verandas, where he would often play solitaire on a rustic table, which he could use without disturbing any of the plants.

He had always wanted to keep a dog; but since Eleanor was not at all friendly to this idea, he had given it up, until recently, when one of his best clients, an Eastern mining man, had shipped him as a present, a pedigreed, Belgian Police dog, with a long line of prize-winning canines as ancestors.

“Well, I don't know what you're going to do with him. We can't have him in the house and he barks so terribly if he's kept tied out of doors. If we turn him loose, he'll walk over all the grass and flower beds, so that the lawn and garden will be completely ruined,” Eleanor had protested, as soon as the dog arrived.

Argus, for that was the pup's name, was a wonderful wolf gray, — son of Audifax Seigestor, whose reputation was international.

The first thing which Richard did, after Argus' arrival, was to have the garage door made over, with an opening near

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the bottom which was just big enough for Argus to open, so that he could go in and out at his own pleasure.

Argus seemed to realize from the first that he was not wanted by the mistress of the house; but he made up his mind that her cold-blooded negligence was more than compensated for by his master's warmth and kindness, — for if there was any man in the world who was heart hungry for the unstinted affection and loyal devotion of a good dog, — that man was Richard Radcliffe. From his earliest boyhood he had been inordinately fond of dogs. He would cheerfully claim any poor, old, homeless, canine creature; take him home, feed him and take care of him. As a college boy he had always owned a dog; but never before in his life, had he really needed and wanted a dog so much as now. He felt that the wagging tail and spontaneous responsiveness of a dog would help to make up for the lack of warmth and consideration which he received in his own home. He made up his mind that nothing should induce him to part with Argus, — not even Eleanor's protests. She had informed Richard that if he expected to keep Argus, that he must be the one to feed him and bathe him. When Richard found that the food, which Eleanor provided for Argus was very limited in quantity, he took matters into his own hands and ordered the butcher to send around, every day, a good beef bone, with some real meat on it. He insisted that this should be thoroughly cooked, — all of which proceedings were the subject of much annoyance to Eleanor.

When it came time for Argus to have his first bath, Eleanor positively refused to permit him to be taken into the basement, where Richard suggested that one of the laundry tubs could be used.

Thus it transpired that Argus' bath had to be postponed, — for several days, — until Radcliffe could make arrange-

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ments to have a bath tub for the special use of Argus, placed in the garage. Richard did not inform Eleanor of this plan, until the plumbers were on the ground.

“Well, I don’t know what the world is coming to, — when a supposedly, sensible man begins to live for the pleasure and happiness of a dog. Of course, Argus should be bathed, if you must have him around, but it’s worse than foolish to go to such an amount of expense. You could very easily have placed a cheap, wooden tub in the rear of the garage, — and you could have carried the water from the spigot to it,” said Eleanor, in a fault-finding tone of voice, — failing to realize, as she did, that a man of Richard’s big heart and generosity of disposition, must find some vent for his affections, other than that which her reserved nature was able to give to him.

“Well, who’s doing this? Who’s dog is Argus, anyway? I think I have the right to make whatever provisions I choose, both for feeding and grooming Argus,” Richard replied, in a spirit of determination, which indicated to Eleanor that he meant what he said, — because there were times when his decisions in domestic matters were absolutely final, — and Eleanor knew, only too well, that this was one of those times.

As a rule, Richard indulged her, actuated mostly by force of habit, — the habit which he had acquired in his early married days, when his one great purpose in life had been to give her unalloyed happiness; when his sympathies for her had been deeply enlisted because he knew that, in her heart, she must feel a certain loneliness, — in being so far away from her own people.

Then, too, no matter how aggressive Richard Radcliffe might be in his relations with men in competitive fields, — there was within his big inner soul, a vital, vibrant, innate sympathy for all woman-kind. Not only had this quality been

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born in him, but it had been bred and nurtured in his character, from his very infancy and young boyhood. His mother had instilled into his very being the principles of honor and devotion and chivalry toward women.

Even now, fourteen years after he had been married, and almost twenty years after his mother's death, he said one day to Blakeman in the office.

“It is impossible for a man, — for a boy, — who has had a good mother, ever to get away from her teaching and example. Her influence forms part of the warp and woof of his life. It remains with him always. It sustains him when everything else in the world may fail him, — and where one is doubly fortunate in having the potential influences of both a good mother and a good father, he is among the most favored of all men. This is the one asset in life which has always constituted my greatest blessing. It is the one thing in the world for which I am the most grateful.”

This very afternoon, when Richard arrived home from the office, he found Eleanor to be in a more highly agitated mood than he had seen her for months. She was in the throes of despair and anger, alternately, while she related to Richard the story of Argus' free-for-all fight with a big, bushy-tailed, black cat, belonging to the Bagleys who lived next door. This combat had taken place in the middle of Eleanor's choicest nasturtium bed. Stray bits of cat's fur, dog hairs, and nasturtium blossoms, were the painful evidences which were left to tell the rest of the tale. To make matters worse, Mrs. Bagley was highly indignant because her blooded, black cat had been drawn into such a brawl and so outrageously torn and battered and wounded by the war-like, savage Argus. This was a source of great grief to Eleanor, who prized Mrs. Bagley's

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friendship more than she did that of any other woman in the neighborhood.

“There’s no use of talking about it; you’ll have to get rid of that dog. I simply can’t stand it any longer. It’s only a question of time anyway, when the authorities would order him to be killed because of his cruelty, so we might as well dispose of him now and save ourselves any further trouble. I know well enough that Mrs. Bagley will never come into our house again,” concluded Eleanor.

“Well, that won’t hurt my feelings one bit, for I think that Bagley is the biggest old bore in town. I never could stand him. As for Argus, I wouldn’t exchange one wag of his tail for the friendship of all the Bagleys in the world. Where is he anyway?”

“I tied him up, of course, — good and fast, too. He was all tired out, — fairly shaking and bristling with anger, after he had nearly killed the poor cat. As soon as he came on to the back porch, I grabbed him by the collar and chained him to the corner of the garage. We won’t turn him loose again until we make some arrangements to let him go for good,” remarked Eleanor emphatically.

“Well, when Argus goes for good I shall go with him,” replied Richard with an equal degree of emphasis.

“Yes, I think you’re just about crazy enough about him to do that very thing. You’ve never acted like yourself since you brought Argus home. You’ve hardly had a rational moment since, and now you would go so far as to let that infernal beast break up your home,” answered Eleanor.

“Yes, and that infernal beast, as you call him, has given me more devotion and affection than I have ever had in the last fifteen years,” replied Richard calmly.

“Well, I’ve heard of women who made fools of them-

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selves over dogs, and I've heard you criticize them, too; but I've never seen anyone who went so far as you're going now," commented Eleanor.

"That's all right, you may say whatever you please, but there isn't anyone in the world who's going to separate me from Argus," remarked Richard.

"Well, I don't know what you're going to do unless we keep him tied up all the time. If we do that, he'll howl and bark and growl so, that he will be complained of as a public nuisance. I'll try to find someone who lives out in the country who wants a dog," suggested Eleanor.

"You heard what I said, didn't you? We're not going to keep Argus tied up and we're not going to dispose of him. He's going to stay right where he is," concluded Richard, as he walked through the house to the back porch, where he took another look at the battle-ground on which the canine-felis domestica combat had taken place.

Richard then walked toward the garage, from which Argus was bounding forward the full length of his chain, and pulling so fiercely to loosen the staple that it seemed he was almost shaking the garage itself from its foundations. Richard soon released him from his bondage, while Argus jumped all over his much loved master, bestowing upon him every expression of affection, of which a dog-heart is capable. He licked Richard's hands in gratitude, — then raising his eyes, he bounded upon his master's body and kissed his face in true dog-fashion, — as much as to say: "Well, I did a very good job today. I thrashed Coal-Fire. He won't trespass upon our premises any more. He doesn't seem to understand that this place is yours and mine. He wants to intrude himself all the while in our garden. He'll stay at home now though, or

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else he'll be carried home a dead cat, the next time he comes over.

"You and I understand each other, don't we? Some way the madame doesn't understand me at all. She seems to think that I'm only a brute with no thoughts, or feeling, or soul. She just doesn't know the A B C of Dogdom. You see, I don't know anything about her world and she doesn't know anything about mine," and Argus was still wagging his tail at a tremendous rate of speed.

"It's the same here, old pal," thought Richard, while he stroked Argus' beautiful gray fur.

The next day, Richard brought home a handsome, black leather dog-collar, ornamented in gold, with Argus' name in full and his master's address and telephone number engraved carefully thereon.

"I suppose that's a reward for his victory yesterday," sarcastically remarked Eleanor.

"Yes, I thought he was deserving of something, after such a hard day, and I hardly felt like presenting him with a medal," laughingly answered Richard.

In his heart, Radcliffe felt that all his worldly possessions, — which had been increasing for many years now, until they represented a very comfortable fortune, had not brought him the soothing balm of the soul which his canine friend poured out upon him effusively every time when he came home. There was something about Argus' implicit trust and dog-confidence, which inspired a joyful response in Richard's grateful spirit.

After all, timber and copper, in which Radcliffe had made much of his money, were only material things. It was true that they helped to build the great industrial forces of the world; but they were at best, just dead, inanimate substances,

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to be turned over for the purpose of making money, — to help make the great commercial wheels go around. The copper mine in Alaska had brought forth rich results. For many years, the stock of the Copper Mountain Development Company had been listed on the New York Stock Exchange. It was now a very active stock. Occasionally the speculators formed pools and sent it up and down, without regard for its intrinsic value, — but it was, after all, a very substantial security. Radcliffe and Hargreaves still owned large blocks of it. Long since, Radcliffe's fortune had surpassed several times that of Radford Bawkus, who had, a few years before, been forced to retire from the Presidency of The First National Bank, because the controlling interest in that institution had been taken over by men who stood for more progressive and sounder economic policies for the business betterment of the community. In fact, Hargreaves and Radcliffe controlled now the policy of the Olympic National Bank, which had proven to be such a strong competitor of the other banks, that it had captured the biggest share of the business of the city.

The aspiration to make a bigger place for himself still survived in Richard's mind but not to the same degree which it had hold of him several years before, when Helen Hammond had furnished him so much inspiration to achieve the very summit of fame and power. This incentive, in Radcliffe's life, had been subdued somewhat when Helen had made up her mind, after long deliberation, — to marry Roger Blake-man. She was a very discreet girl, and her discretion had grown with her years, observation and experience. She really had a heart-interest in Richard Radcliffe. But she was of a very practical turn of mind.

"But what's the use?" she said to her mother one day,

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“I might as well be spending my time and working my head off for a man whose advancement in life, I will be able to share. If I go on working day and night, year after year, for Richard Radcliffe, I will grow old prematurely and in the end, I will have no tangible reward. Had he been single when I met him, I believe that, with my help, he could have become one of the most eminent and distinguished men in public life; but the Fates evidently did not plan our lives that way, — and so, we must make the best of it. Roger has good material in him. The Blakemans originally were a fine old New England family. I don’t believe that he has as much natural ability as Radcliffe; — but after all, Roger is far above the average. I know that I can contribute something toward his success. I can help him to plan his life better than he can plan it himself. Then, too, I really like him; and although it is not a case of being unable to live without him, at the same time, we are very congenial, and I feel sure that we shall always be able to get along well together.

“In any event, we have to admit that very few people are able to live their romances, — to carry out the high spots in their romantic adventures. Only a few ever reach the zenith in bestowing and receiving the maximum degree of affection, — in an affair of the heart. So I have made up my mind to marry Roger.”

True to her practical nature, Helen Hammond had carried out her plans. They had been married six years now. They had two bright, healthy children, — a girl and a boy. Roger had been chosen Prosecuting Attorney at the last annual election; while the politicians agreed that he would never set the world on fire, still he had the confidence of the community and was well assured of a moderate degree of success in whatever he might attempt. In fact, he was generally over-

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estimated by the public, — by those of no great political perspicacity. The plain man in the street was inclined to look up to Roger Blakeman as a very exceptional public official. This was due, in no small measure, to the resourcefulness and ingenuity of Blakeman's wife, who knew exactly how to manage publicity and how to capitalize official position.

And so life went on in Mount Olympic. Richard Radcliffe's vanity had not been sorely wounded by Helen's marriage to Blakeman. Radcliffe had always liked Helen, and he had even gone so far as to admit to himself that if circumstances had been different, he would undoubtedly have married her; and yet, he realized that she did not represent his highest ideal of womanhood. But, was there any woman in the world who did?

CHAPTER VII

The Dinner at the Worthington-Hargreaves'

“**I** RECEIVED cards today inviting us to a dinner at the Hargreaves'. Loyola has a house guest from the East. Her name isn't on the cards, though. I judge that this is going to be quite a formal affair, because I can not remember only three times, in all the years during which we have known them, when they have issued formal invitations. You know they usually just call us up by telephone when they invite us over. Although I just detest formal functions, I know that I'll have to go with you, because, of course, you wouldn't miss it for the world.

“Loyola always depends on you to make jokes and tell stories. You always seem to like the sound of your own voice so well, that I think you enjoy helping her entertain as much as she does having you.”

Such was Eleanor's greeting, one evening in the early fall of 1916, just as Richard had entered the house and was hanging his over-coat in a closet opening from the library. This little recess in the wall had a mahogany door, in the front of which was a full length Newcomb mirror. This clothes-press had been reserved for Richard's belongings ever since the house had been built. Here he kept his over-coats, over-shoes, and every day hats. His other wardrobe, with all its habiliments, was kept in the spacious closet off his bedroom upstairs. Eleanor always saw to it that his wearing apparel was kept

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in his own apartments, and she had trained him from their earliest married days, to keep everything concentrated and in order, — carefully packed or hanging on the walls protected by dust-coverings.

Richard was naturally quite orderly, but occasionally, when he was in a hurry, he had formed the habit of leaving his discarded clothing or suits which needed pressing, either on the floor or hanging over the backs of chairs. This negligence always brought forth a little dissertation on the subject of his untidiness.

“Don’t put your wet over-shoes in that closet! Don’t hang your over-coat there when it’s wet! Take them out in the kitchen and have Freida dry them by the stove. I think I’ve reminded you of this thoughtlessness all these years, now, until you ought to begin to know how to take care of your damp clothes,” added Eleanor, to her previous remarks on the subject of the Hargreaves’ dinner.

“No, that’s just the reason I don’t remember. You see that my sub-conscious mind has acquired the habit of being nagged by you first, before I put away wet clothing; — so of course, I don’t take care of it on my own initiative, — not until after you have called my attention to it,” replied Richard, rather nonchalantly.

Just as Freida was serving the soup course, during their evening meal, Eleanor resumed the subject of the forthcoming event at the Hargreaves’.

“I haven’t seen Loyola lately, — not for a week or two. I wonder who it is who is visiting her. Have you heard Hargreaves say?”

“Yes, it’s a Miss Marling from New York. She used to go to school with Loyola. Hargreaves tells me that she is a very interesting woman, — full of enthusiasm for present day

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events, — a woman who has had rather unusual social opportunities, — a cosmopolite, I judge. I imagine that it may be something of a treat to meet her.

“It’s been so long since we have met anyone at all out of the ordinary that I am rather looking forward to making Miss Marling’s acquaintance,” concluded Richard, while he added a little paprika to the vermicelli soup.

“Oh, I don’t know! It hasn’t been so long since we were in San Francisco, where we met Admiral Beecher; — and it has only been five years since we made our trip around the world. I am sure no one could have met more distinguished people than we did then, with our letters of introduction from United States Senator Wainwright,” commented Eleanor.

“Oh, yes! But five years is a long time ago, — a lot of things have happened in the world since then, — and as for Admiral Beecher, he didn’t appeal to me as a man of any great parts. If he hadn’t had an Admiral’s uniform to recommend him, I don’t think he would have made any Hell of an impression anywhere.”

“Oh, I thought he was perfectly charming. He had such splendid manners and such a wonderful appreciation of all the beautiful things in life. He had such a true regard for harmony in everything, and such a fine understanding of aesthetics.”

“Well, of course, he didn’t have an opportunity to reveal any of that understanding to me,” responded Richard, smilingly.

“You appreciate superficial beauty, — the beauty which is obvious or apparent to the discerning eye, — but what I mean when I speak of Admiral Beecher’s appreciation of beauty, — is that he understands the theory or philosophy of taste; the real science of the beautiful,” explained Eleanor.

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"Oh, indeed!" ejaculated Richard. "I fear that your discrimination is too intricate for me to comprehend."

"Well, it's a strange thing that the legal mind always questions or condemns that which it can not understand," answered Eleanor, in a tone of finality, which indicated perfect confidence in her own opinion.

"It's probably because of our limitations. You know everyone has them. They are only fatal, however, when one is so deep down in a rut that he can not see over the rim. I flatter myself that I have never gone that far down."

The door bell rang. It was Edith Compton, Eleanor's old neighbor, whose husband was going to attend an Elks' Banquet that evening, and who had driven around by the Radcliffe residence, where he left his wife to spend the evening.

"Oh, it's you, Edith? Come right along into the dining-room. We haven't finished dinner yet," exclaimed Eleanor, when she heard Edith's voice in the hall, when Frieda opened the door.

"Well, what do you know? I suppose you've received your invitation to the Hargreaves' dinner. There was no mention of the guest of honor's name. They must intend that part as a surprise. You know I told you yesterday that Loyola had a friend here from the East, but I couldn't remember her name," said Edith Compton, as she rattled on in her usual rapid-fire way of talking.

"What did you say her name is?" queried Eleanor, turning to Richard.

"It's Miss Marling, — Maxine Marling, I believe."

"Rather euphonious, — fine alliteration, too," responded Edith, in her usual vivacious manner.

"Well, if you ladies will excuse me now, — I have an

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engagement at the Club. I have to meet Hargreaves there. One of his old Yale chums is in town, and he told me today that he wanted me to meet him. Something up his sleeve, I suppose. You never can tell what that fellow Hargreaves has in mind. He's some schemer all right," said Richard, by way of apologizing for leaving so abruptly, after Edith Compton had come.

"I guess he hasn't anything on you, when it comes to scheming. Bob says that you've nearly doubled for Hargreaves, the fortune which his father left him. Anyway, he furnishes you with a wonderfully good excuse for getting away from us tonight," commented Edith facetiously.

"Oh, no. Richard told me, several days ago, that he had an engagement with Hargreaves for this evening," volunteered Eleanor, who always wanted to conceal from Edith Compton any information which would point to the fact that Richard ever neglected his wife in the evening.

"What are you going to wear?" queried Edith, as soon as Richard was out of the room.

"Oh, I don't know. I haven't thought so very much about it. I think, perhaps, I will wear my dark red velvet gown, which I bought in San Francisco. I've never liked it especially, — but Richard just insisted that I should buy it, — so I did. I've never had much good out of it. In fact, I've never worn it but twice, — once at the dinner given for Admiral Beecher, before we left San Francisco, and then I wore it at the officers' dinner on the Steamship Hargreaves, — when the vessel was christened."

"Yes, I remember, and you looked perfectly stunning in it. Bob spoke about it at the time. He said you were the best dressed woman there," remarked Edith, with her usual flattery

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of speech, which she always veneered with such a camouflage of enthusiasm that her praise had the ring of sincerity in it.

"Well, he did me too much honor, if he said that. I thought your black lace was the softest, most artistic gown, there."

"Oh, that old thing. I've just cut it up, and I'm using the lace to cover some sofa pillows. I have a new, dove-colored, gray Georgette, combined with a filmy, soft lace of the same shade. It is draped effectively, from one side of the waist to the bottom of the skirt, on the other side, where it is caught by a festoon of little pink roses. I just bought the stockings, shoes, and gray lace hat, with a big gray feather to match. The whole combination is just screaming. I guess I'll wear that," concluded Edith.

"It sounds very pretty. You always have something new for every occasion; — but, of course, you go out so much more than I do, that it is really necessary for you to spend more time and money on dress. Very often, I get a new costume and I go so little that it is all out of style before I have really had just the right opportunity to do it justice. When I see that I'm not getting any real good out of a perfectly good, new dress, I just box it up and send it back East to one of my sisters," remarked Eleanor.

"Well, I suppose you and Richard will be seated somewhere close to the host and hostess and their guest of honor, Wednesday night. You know the Hargreaves' so much better than we do. I've really never been in their home many times; and yet, there is no one in town whom I enjoy more, except you and Richard. The Hargreaves have such a fine lot of friends, too. Someone is always bobbing up from somewhere. They travel so much, that they meet everyone, who is worth knowing. They have such an interesting home, — so many unique

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and valuable things, from all parts of the world. They're such a congenial couple, too, — such good fellows with each other. Sometimes, I almost envy them the joy which they seem to find in each other's company.

“Bob's all right, of course, — he's a very good husband in many ways, — but he's spent just oodles of the money my father left me, and he doesn't seem to appreciate it, either. He never seems to think about what it has meant to him to be able to lead such a care-free life, without having to make good himself. He never really wants to settle down to anything serious. He just likes to flit about, from one thing to another, and from one place to another, without taking any responsibility, or thought, for the morrow.

“I get awfully tired of it sometimes, too, — but it doesn't seem to matter to him. In fact, he would just as soon, — I think he even prefers to travel around by himself. He often makes a long trip, without me. After all, we don't mean such a lot to each other; although there are times when we save each other from being real lonesome. For the most part, though, we each go our own way. We bore each other terribly at times; but sometimes, we would rather be bored than to endure real loneliness. We don't spend nearly half our time together, — no matter whether we are in town, or away from home. It has been just like this for years; in fact, since the first year after we were married.

“My married life has been so different from yours. Now, you always just love to stay at home, and I know you and Richard must be wonderfully happy, or you would go out more than you do,” concluded Edith, while she reserved to herself her own suspicions, that the dove of peace which ostensibly hovered about the Radcliffe home was sometimes driven away by the nagging of the sparrow-hawk.

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Eleanor's pride forced her to answer:

"Yes, we are quite contented to stay at home most of the time; read our books, enjoy our pictures, and take life quietly."

Just at this instant, Argus gave a loud, shrieking bark, outside the back door.

"He wants to come back into the house. He followed Richard out when he left," remarked Edith.

"Yes, he doesn't stay in the house much, when Richard's not at home," replied Eleanor.

"Well, he seems to want to come in right now," said Edith.

"I feel safer to have him outside, when Richard's away, so I think I'll leave him there."

"Oh, he's such a darling dog, why don't you let him in? I just love to stroke his handsome fur. I think he's the most wonderful dog I've ever seen," said Edith, with her usual enthusiasm.

"Yes, but you don't have to clean up the tracks which he leaves, when he comes into the house. Richard is very thoughtful, though, and careful about keeping him clean, so that he won't make me any trouble," commented Eleanor, hoping to give the impression that Richard's assiduous devotion to her would prevent his over-indulgence of his canine treasure.

Eleanor's innately proud instincts would never permit her to let anyone think that Richard ever trespassed upon her will, even in the slightest matters. However, Edith had long since formed her own opinions of Eleanor's dominating, domestic policy. Mrs. Compton possessed an almost uncanny sense of intuition, which had been brought to its present state of acute development, through her many years of association with her evasive, elusive, matrimonial partner. She was not

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an easy woman to fool; but she was too tactful to annoy her friends, by revealing to them any of her intuitive knowledge, which might embarrass them. She had always hoped to penetrate Eleanor Radcliffe's steel-clad armor of pride, — but, thus far, she had never been able to accomplish her purpose, because Eleanor had in her nature, a large measure of discretion, as well as an ancestral pride, which always restrained her from telling any of the secrets of her heart, — even to her most intimate friends.

“Well, I guess that Bob isn't coming back after me tonight. Anyway, he won't come until it's too late. Our night driver has a bad cold right now, so I think I'll have to telephone for a taxi to take me home,” suggested Edith Compton, when she heard the big Swiss clock, which adorned the Radcliffe front hall, striking eleven.

“Something must have detained Richard. He is very seldom so late as this. He'll probably be here in a few minutes, and then he'll drive you home,” volunteered Eleanor.

“No, I don't think I'll wait. He may be tied up in some important, business conference, so I guess I'll go,” said Edith, who had the good sense to let Eleanor believe that she thought that her hostess was especially favored by having a husband who never invented excuses, or neglected his wife. Edith had divulged her own heart-secrets, partly because it was her nature to be rather confidential, and partly because, she hoped to win Eleanor Radcliffe's innermost confidences. Then, too, Bob Compton had always been such a rounder that there was no use of attempting to disguise the fact. He lacked Richard Radcliffe's sense of dignity and proportion.

Edith went home. Richard arrived about twelve-thirty, long after Eleanor was in bed and asleep. She cared too much for her own personal comfort to be kept awake, far into the

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night, by Richard's absence. For several years, now, since she had made up her mind to lead half-contentedly, an unromantic, quiet life, she had made a practice of retiring rather early, when Richard was out in the evening.

As a matter of fact, on this particular evening, Hargreaves and his former college friend, Bradford, had left the Olympic Club shortly after nine o'clock. Hargreaves never neglected Mrs. Hargreaves, because she made his home life so agreeable, that he would have been neglecting himself and his own highest happiness, if he had been negligent of her. Had he planned his life solely from a selfish viewpoint, he would have spent the most of his time with his wife.

After Hargreaves and his friend left the Club, Richard stayed there, during the remainder of the evening, where he played cards with old Doc Witherill and two other cronies, — winding up with a buffet supper about midnight.

The following Wednesday was the appointed day for the dinner party at the Worthington-Hargreaves'.

As the guests, about twenty in number, assembled in the spacious, front parlor of the Hargreaves' residence, Mrs. Hargreaves, in her modest, unpretentious manner, greeted each one with her usual warmth and cordiality. There was nothing at all stereotyped about her form of greeting, as she welcomed every guest in such a way as to make him or her feel that everyone present was very essential to the success of the occasion. Loyola Hargreaves' tact was like that of a sensitive child, — in that her quickness of understanding enabled her to read the hearts of others, — almost at a glance. Whenever she took the hand of another, in greeting, — the effect was almost electrical. She seemed to grasp the very secrets of the soul. When these confidences once became a part of her, she would lock them in her own bosom, — never revealing them

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to the curious, or the vulgar. At the same time, she would always find some way of saying or doing something which would meet the soul-hunger of others in an effective manner.

Her dignity was unimpeachable. Just as the Mimosa plant will close its leaves at the touch of a finger, as if resenting an insult to its delicacy, so Loyola Hargreaves guarded the secrets of her friends. She never abdicated her womanly majesty. She was always conscious of her quiet power, — over her home, — her husband, her children and her friends. She may not have realized the strength of her power, which was purer than the ozone of the air itself; but even though she did not comprehend, to the greatest degree, the extent of her dominions, she did know that she would tolerate no idleness in her life, and that she would strive with all her might to sustain the courage of all those who came within the radius of her influence. She understood, in its fullness, the meaning of the word responsibility, and she was responsive to her understanding of all that this word meant to her.

Worthington-Hargreaves was more conventional in his every day relationships than was his wife. The reception which he accorded to his guests, on the occasion of this dinner party, was more formal in its greeting than was that of Mrs. Hargreaves. It was more formal, because there was less individuality in it. In other words, it was not within the power of Worthington-Hargreaves to express so much of his personality, — probably because he did not have so much personality to express.

Every one received the same hand-shake and the same smile. Hargreaves occupied the position which he did, because of the fortune which he had inherited from his father, — the good breeding and traditions, which formed his background, — and because of the increased prestige which had

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come to him when he chose for his wife, Loyola Winfield, who represented the very best standards of culture and womanly character. Had Hargreaves been so unfortunate as to have chosen a different kind of wife, — one of the social butterfly type, for instance, he might have retrograded in the social scale.

He belonged to that class of men who are quite likely to assume something of the color and nature of their close associates. That is, he was inclined to be more of a follower than a leader. He was, by no means, a weak character; but he was naturally agreeable and inclined to do many of the things which were suggested by his companions and intimates. His father had been successful in training him to be a fairly good judge of business advisers. He had shown himself responsive to this training, when he had chosen Richard Radcliffe to represent him in his important business matters.

As the guests at the Hargreaves' dinner made their way from the parlors to the polychrome Beaux Arts dining-room and found their places at the long table, Maxine Marling, the guest of honor, who had just been presented by Mrs. Hargreaves to all of her guests, found herself seated next to Mr. Hargreaves on the left, and Richard Radcliffe on her right.

At first glance, Maxine was not strikingly beautiful, — and yet, she possessed a very wholesome quality of beauty. Her large, blue eyes bespoke a big heart, which had gathered from others the stories of their lives' tragedies and ensuing heart-aches, as well as many sorry tales of dissipated fortunes and defeated ambitions.

By nature, Maxine was very enthusiastic. She had always believed that enthusiasm was more contagious than anything else in the world, except the lack of it. The natural high color of her blonde cheeks indicated a highly sensitive, emotional

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nature. Her dark brown hair, — always wavy and glossy, with a brilliant lustre, likewise reflected her spontaneous, sympathetic temperament. She was always exceedingly well-groomed and well-gowned.

No Grecian lady was ever more stately, or more lovely, than Maxine was on this occasion. She wore a heavily beaded, black lace gown, cut on Grecian lines. On the left side, a wing-like panel fell from the shoulder, forming a long train, and the waist was girdled rather loosely, with a narrow band of beaded trimming, which matched the strips of beads, which fell the full length of the costume. Her only ornament was a string of pearls of rare color and deep lustre.

The animation in Maxine's deep blue eyes, so brilliantly enhanced by her pink cheeks, constituted a picture, which was intensified in artistic merit, by the setting which the dining-room afforded. All the electric light bulbs in the room were covered with orchids, which lent a transcendent glow to the brilliant picture. In the center of the table was a huge piece of orchids and American Beauty roses. There was a corsage, consisting of lilies-of-the-valley, Jack-roses and orchids, provided for each of the women guests. The place-cards were hand-painted, three-petaled orchids, intertwined with dainty, pink rose-buds. The dinner set was of rarest Haviland design in sapphire blue, ornamented in gold bands, brought together by the Hargreaves' coat-of-arms, — a complete armorial composition of a conquering knight returning to his defeated antagonist, the sword, which the latter has just surrendered.

Mrs. Hargreaves was a petite blonde. At this brilliant affair, she wore a costume of meteor crepe in deep, sapphire blue.

“Mrs. Hargreaves, — Loyola, I always call her, is at her

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very best tonight," remarked Richard to Maxine, as soon as they were seated. "I suppose you have known her, too, for many years," he continued.

"Yes, indeed. When I was a Freshman in boarding-school, Loyola Winfield, she was then, was appointed by the Dean to act as my Big Sister. She was a Senior when I entered Miss Maxwell's School, and she won my everlasting gratitude by her constant attentions to me, — when I was a very home-sick little girl, — away from home for the first time," responded Maxine.

"So you are really a protégé of hers, then. Well, you do her great credit, I'm sure. I know that she must feel honored now, that she ever had the privilege of being at your service. I knew that she had many things in her life in which she could take great pride; — but now that I have met you, I think that she deserves a laurel wreath," suggested Richard, with his usual *savoir-faire*.

"She can't possibly take any more pride in my friendship than I do in hers, although she is very generous, always, in her estimate of others, and especially so, of her particular friends. In my own heart, I feel sure that there are more reasons why I should be proud of her than there are reasons why she should be proud of me. In any event, the friendship between us has always been interesting and stimulating," concluded Maxine.

"Some way I have the impression that any one who is so fortunate as to win your friendship, will always find not only a stimulus, but an inspiration in it," flatteringly suggested Richard, while the conclusion that Maxine was, at least, five years younger than her hostess, was taking deep root in his mind. He knew Mrs. Hargreaves to be thirty-five, because

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he had helped to celebrate her last birthday at a dinner-party given by Mr. Hargreaves in honor of his wife.

“I think you are paying me rather more of a compliment than I deserve on so short an acquaintance,” replied Maxine.

Just at this instant the fish-course was served. It consisted of Quinault Salmon in cream Mornay.

“This is one of the most palatable dishes in your Western country. We never get salmon, back East, which taste like that,” commented Maxine.

“Yes, the salmon season was a very good one this year. Whenever I see salmon, I am always reminded of a story of two brothers, who lived near Astoria, Oregon. They were skillful fishermen. One day the leading preacher of the town, who was no fisherman at all, but a good fellow, requested the boys to bring him some salmon.

The following day the boys caught two fine salmon, wrapped them in cheese-cloth, put them in their flivver, and started for the preacher’s house, five miles away. They stopped at a half-way house to get a drink. This was in the good old days. Two neighbor boys came along.

“‘Let’s see what they have caught now,’ remarked the older brother.

“‘Sure enough, it’s salmon. Let’s play a practical joke, — let’s take their fish and substitute sturgeon.’

“No sooner said than done.

“Their friends came out of the Inn and unsuspectingly went on their way. When they arrived in front of the preacher’s house, they unwrapped the fish to take one more look at their fine catch before they gave them away.

“‘Why, Bill, these are sturgeon,’ said Tom.

“‘You idiot, they are not. We said they were salmon when we caught them,’ Bill replied indignantly.

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“ ‘It matters not, they are sturgeon; just look at them!’ calmly asserted Tom.

“ ‘Bill looked again. Yes, they were sturgeon. There was no question about it. Disappointed and too proud to admit their mistake to the preacher, — they put the fish back in the flivver and started for home. At the half-way house, they decided to stop again for another drink. While they were thus engaged, the two culprits, who had become penitent, removed the sturgeon and put back the salmon.

“ ‘Bill and Tom drove home, thinking, of course, that they had sturgeon. Before they took the fish into the house, they gave another look.

“ ‘Why, Tom, these are salmon, as fine salmon as we ever caught,’ said Bill.

“ ‘Tom thundered, ‘You fool! of course they are not salmon. We had only two drinks, but they have certainly affected you.’

“ ‘No,’ said Bill, ‘look again!’

“ ‘Tom looked; there they were; two of the finest salmon they had ever seen.

“ ‘Bill looked at Tom and Tom looked at Bill; then Tom said, as he looked at the fish:

“ ‘Well, you are the Damndest fish I ever saw. You are salmon in the country and sturgeon in the city.’ ”

Maxine’s amusement at Richard’s story, so cleverly told, was most apparent. She smiled agreeably, while he related the incidents of the humorous occurrence, — and then laughed understandingly, when he reached the climax. “ ‘Thank God, I’ve found a woman who has a sense of humor,’ ” he thought to himself.

Worthington-Hargreaves’ attention was diverted by Maxine’s laugh. “ ‘So he’s been telling you his salmon-stur-

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geon story, has he? Well, get him to tell you another. He's just full of them," remarked Hargreaves, who turned again to continue his conversation with the Widow Runyon, a little, white haired, old lady, who had been a life-long friend of Hargreaves' mother. Mrs. Runyon was somewhat handicapped by deafness, and she was very sensitive concerning the social limitations which this infirmity placed upon her. She seldom accepted invitations to formal parties; but Loyola Hargreaves always made her feel that her presence added so much to the prestige and dignity of any social event, that, as hostess, she could not very well do without her.

While the other guests chatted merrily, during the dinner hour, Richard continued to entertain Maxine.

"Your story about the fish might be applied to some men who are salmon in their own communities, and who sometimes prove to be sturgeon when they enter larger fields of activity. Just for the moment, it reminded me of a man who held office in the County where I was brought up, back in New York State. He succeeded very well as Custodian of the County Records, and he was a fairly good mixer among men. However, he became impressed to an exaggerated degree with his own importance, so that he sought the nomination as a Member of Congress and was finally elected. This proved to be too much for him. In Washington, he tackled, with full confidence, some of the greatest problems of government. This was right at the beginning of his term there, too. As you can well imagine, he made himself quite ridiculous;—although we always believed, back in Cortland, that if he had had the good sense to get his bearings properly, at the beginning of his National career, he might have distinguished himself; but, instead, he proved to be 'a salmon in the country and a

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sturgeon in the city',” commented Maxine, after Richard had finished his story.

“Yes, he might better have been content to remain ‘first in a little Iberian village, than to have been second in Rome’; — but that is the trouble with some men, — they never discover their own limitations until they have over-reached themselves, — or even disgraced themselves. It is a very wise man who knows when he has reached the limit of his abilities in the world of achievement, — although I believe that most men never attain the place where they can express their highest purposes, or translate into action their greatest talents. Of course there are some instances, where a man’s capabilities are not commensurate with his ambitions; but as a rule, I believe, that more often he is capable of achieving more than that to which he aspires.

“Out West here we have a semi-annual Psychic Carnival, when numerous self-acclaimed psychologists come to tell us that we can take time and opportunity by the forelock and put ourselves in whatsoever places in the world we may desire; when, as a matter of fact, I believe, that we can only achieve our utmost success by consistent, intelligent, plodding efforts, along the lines of our natural abilities,” concluded Richard.

“Yes, hard work nearly always proves to be the best antidote for failure,” remarked Maxine. “I believe it was Emerson who said, that limitation is the only sin. I don’t believe that it is wise, or practical, to place upon ourselves any limitations in a field of endeavor in which we have reasonable assurance that we have our share of talent. I think that it was Carlyle who said: ‘Resolution is almost Omnipotent’,” remarked Maxine.

“I see that you have a rather serious turn of mind. At the same time, I am glad to know that you appreciate the

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humorous side of life. Speaking of the power to control situations by our mental processes of resolution and so on, reminds me of another story of a New York business man, who promised his wife to come home early, one Saturday afternoon to take her driving, then to a theatre, and dinner afterward. The man never showed up until four o'clock Sunday morning. He contemplated embarrassment in explaining the situation to his wife. As he approached their apartment, he asserted mentally:

“ ‘I t-h-i-n-k she won't wake up!’

“ ‘Then he repeated, ‘I t-h-i-n-k she won't wake up!’

“ ‘She did wake up. *She did wake up!*

“ ‘What about this? You promised me to be here Saturday at noon.’

“ ‘Yes, my dear, but if you will give me one minute, I can explain all to you. You see, at a quarter before twelve, I left my office to *rush* home to you. Just as I closed the door, and was pressing the elevator button, my best client, who pays me more than ninety percent of my income, came along, patted me on the shoulder, and said:

“ ‘ ‘ ‘Come on, old Sport, and celebrate my birthday with me.’

“ ‘ ‘But this won't happen again for a year, dear, because no man has a birthday but once a year.’

“ ‘His wife looked very incredulous, instead of giving him credit for being sufficiently resourceful to invent a good story on the spur of the moment.

“ ‘ ‘W'y, John! This best client of yours, whom you have just told me about, has been waiting here in the house all this evening, with his wife, hoping that you would come home.’

“ ‘Without apparent surprise, or any evidence of being flabbergasted, John ejaculated:

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“ ‘That doesn’t make a damned bit of difference. *That’s my story and I’m going to stick to it!*’ ”

Maxine laughed heartily. With her keen degree of perspicacity, she might have suspected that, perhaps, there had been parallel situations in Richard Radcliffe’s own life.

At this point the cakes and ices were brought in. The latter were in the forms of small baskets of roses, both pink and red, which added the culminating artistic touch to this sumptuous dinner.

Richard Radcliffe, with his natural susceptibility to the artistic and beautiful, was fully responsive to the harmonizing influences of the scene which surrounded him.

“I feel that I have been trebly fortunate this evening. First, our hostess is a social favorite of mine; secondly, she has provided us with an exquisite setting for this incomparable dinner; thirdly, and best of all, she has conferred the greatest honor of the evening upon me, by seating me next to her brilliant guest of honor,” said Richard to Maxine, while they sipped their coffee, followed by *creme de menthe*, the last of a well-arranged series of stimulating beverages.

“Indeed, she has honored you no more than she has favored me. I have not been so well entertained by any man’s anecdote and conversation, in a long time,” quickly responded Maxine.

“It is so seldom that one meets a really interesting woman,” said Richard, in a deeply appreciative, flattering tone.

Following the dinner, more than a score of other guests arrived, who had been invited to the dance which was to begin about ten o’clock. Several of the men went to the smoking room for a chat, before they found their partners for the first dance. Before Richard joined the other men, he remarked to Maxine:

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“I’ll find you later in the reception room. Of course, you dance. I hope that you will honor me by reserving several dances. I will join you presently.”

Just at this instant, Pratt Dickinson, a prominent bachelor and typical man-about-town, who was a club friend and client of Richard Radcliffe, came along. Richard observed that Dickinson was casting some very direct and admiring glances toward Maxine. Dickinson had not been present at the dinner. He had just come for the dance, and had not yet been presented to the guest of honor. Richard introduced Dickinson to Maxine. Then he excused himself, while Dickinson remained for a few minutes, entertaining her, with his usual fund of wit and humor,—the general, small talk, of which he was so capable. The music started in the ball-room, which was just off the dining-room. Just as Dickinson requested Maxine to give him the first dance, Worthington-Hargreaves returned from the smoking-room to remind her that she had promised to open the ball with him, while Mrs. Hargreaves received the new-comers, and looked after those who did not dance. Maxine danced with Hargreaves; but promised Dickinson the next dance.

Meanwhile, Richard went to speak to Eleanor, whom he found chatting with Edith Compton.

“No, I don’t care to dance tonight. Edith has just sprained her ankle slightly,—so she doesn’t care to dance either. I brought along a piece of lace, which I am crocheting, so we’ll sit here by the fire-place awhile,” Eleanor assured Richard, who then inquired, very solicitously, concerning Edith Compton’s accident.

“Oh, it’s nothing at all. It happened yesterday. I slipped on the sidewalk and turned my ankle, just as I had one foot on the ground, when I was getting out of the auto-

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mobile. You run along and have a good time. Isn't Miss Marling perfectly stunning? You had better go and look her up, or she'll be so surrounded that you won't get a dance this evening. I know that Bob will be just crazy to talk to her. I hope he will get a dance with her. You'll see to it, won't you?" ejaculated Edith, with her usual good humor.

Richard entered the ball-room just in time to meet Dickinson and Maxine, as they finished their dance. Maxine was playing artfully, with a huge, black, ostrich feather fan, which harmonized in its lustrous shades and tones, with the iridescent bead-work of her evening gown.

Evidently, Maxine was making one of her clever, meaningless replies, to the flattering remarks poured into her ears by her new admirer; — for Dickinson was a past master in the art of showering extravagant compliments upon interesting and attractive women.

"You had to come back, didn't you, old Sport? I was just on the point of inviting Miss Marling to sit out a dance with me," commented Dickinson.

"You didn't think, did you, that I intended to leave a prize like her in your company, any longer than it was absolutely necessary that I should to be polite?" explained Richard, good-naturedly.

"Well, I don't intend to leave until she promises me another dance," said Dickinson.

Maxine assented. "Look me up a little later, when they are playing a waltz. You waltz so very well," she added.

"I'm going to try to find Mrs. Hargreaves. She told me that she had a young debutante, — a Miss Fuller, whom she wanted me to meet tonight," commented Dickinson. Just as he turned to go away he caught a glimpse of Priscilla Payette, — one of the prettiest girls in the younger set, — the daughter

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of a French count, who had married a niece of the Senior Hargreaves. After Count Payette had squandered the greater part of his wife's inheritance from her father, — it was Loyola Hargreaves who had come to the rescue, by insisting that her husband should provide substantially for his unfortunate cousins, — and in such a way, too, that Mrs. Payette and Priscilla would not know but that the money came from some small investments which Worthington-Hargreaves had made for them out of the ruins of the financial wreck brought upon the Payettes by the irresponsible Count. Indeed, Cousin Frances, for that was Mrs. Payette's name, believed to this day that it was through some Divinely generous Providence, that the remnants of their fortune had been brought under the spell of a Magic Midas. The myth of Dionysius, or the miracle of the loaves and fishes, was no more wonderful to her than was the story of her own miraculous experience in the world of finance.

While Dickinson led Priscilla Payette away to the fox-trot, Richard remarked to Maxine :

“I don't know where he finds them all, but they all seem to fall for him.”

“I don't know as to that; but isn't he luckier in making discoveries than he is fortunate in making conquests?” queried Maxine.

“You make me suspicious, now, that he has already discovered your merits and charms; and that he is, thus early, attempting to make a conquest of your heart,” responded Richard promptly.

“Now you flatter me. We were only amusing each other. He just impressed me as a sprightly chap, of rather dashing aspect, with a love of adventure, which is apparent in his bold, clear, spirited eye. I think that he loves his ease, the

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arts, and good living, — as is indicated by his sleek, well-groomed appearance. Evidently, he never neglects the sartorial side. He is a strange combination of poise and boundless energy, which I fear, he often misdirects into quite unworthy channels," remarked Maxine, off-handedly.

"Yes, indeed, — into channels not at all deserving of his unusual talents and native capabilities. He is one of those men whom we were discussing at the dinner-table, — who is capable of achieving more than his ambitions will ever lead him to.

"But, speaking of conquests, — if I may be perfectly frank with you on this short acquaintance, — I must remark that I do not understand how it can be possible that you, — with your very obvious, sympathetic nature, could have maintained such an invulnerable position, during all the persistent attempts and well-established barrages, which the most eligible men must have made in their efforts to complete a conquest of your heart," concluded Richard.

"Well, you see, I'm peculiar. In fact, I think I'm very peculiar, — and by that I don't mean that I am any remarkable exception among people in general. Every one is eccentric, you know, when we know them at close range. There are differences in degrees of eccentricity, of course; — but, after all, our individual peculiarities make us all very complex, — and difficult for another to understand. Outwardly, well-bred people are, as a rule, very simple, but I have never known any one, with whom I have been associated at all frequently, who has not proven to be rather intricate. That is why it is so difficult to adjust one's self, permanently, to the life of another. In fact, I believe that is about the most difficult thing in the world to do successfully. Most attempts at such a life-long adjustment prove to be only compromises."

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“Yes, I see exactly what you mean. It is the old story, — the thread-bare adage of fools rushing in where angels fear to tread,” replied Richard, thoughtfully.

“No, I wouldn’t put it exactly that way. It is not that people are either fools or foolish. It is their innate desire for companionship, which induces them to accept such vital compromises. In other words, the human heart, during a period of loneliness, often permits its insatiable thirst for companionship to out-weigh the better judgment of the mind. It is more a case of ‘Evil is wrought for want of thought as well as want of mind’.”

“How does it happen, occasionally, that an individual, you, for instance, should be so well-balanced, — while most of the rest of us grope along, in the dark, and in our loneliness, impulsively commit ourselves to some alliance which works havoc for the rest of our days?” queried Richard, hardly realizing, for the moment, just how much of his own life’s history he had revealed by this last question.

“It isn’t because I’m so well-balanced. In fact, it is just the reverse. It is because I’m so eccentric that I revolve in a circle, which does not have the same center as that of other individuals. My good fortune lies in knowing, myself, — that I am eccentric, — while most people don’t understand their own eccentricities, and would not take the time, or trouble, to analyze them if they did,” she concluded.

“You interest me immensely, — more so, than any one whom I have met, — in a long time. Where did you originate, anyway, if I’m not getting to be too personal?”

“I was born in Cortland, New York. You remember that I spoke of Cortland County. My father was a banker there; — whose father before him, was one of the pioneers in that country. Soon after I completed my course in boarding-school,

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my father died. I remained at home, with my mother, for a year. She had suffered a serious reaction, which resulted in a severe physical breakdown, after my father's death. She yielded so much to her grief that she went to an untimely death, the year after my father passed on. My two brothers, both older than myself, were married and settled down, — so I was left quite alone in the world. I had inherited a sufficient competence to maintain myself very comfortably; — and I decided, that, since there were no other demands upon me, at the time, that the best thing which I could do was to give myself the advantages of a four years' course in a University. I had spent so many years in a girls' school, that I thought it would be better for me to attend a co-educational college; — so I entered Cornell University, — Sage College, and took my degree there. After that, I traveled for several years, and in that way, I gained material which has enabled me to contribute, with increasing frequency, and I believe, influence, to many of the standard magazines."

"You've had a very interesting life. A cosmopolite always gets more out of life than the provincialite. Take my own case, for instance. I've had to remain in one place most of the time. Of course, I've taken trips, — a good many of them. On one occasion, I was able to make a four months' trip around the world; but that was the longest period of time that I have ever been able to leave my business and law practice. So you see, that there has been inevitably a great deal of monotony in my life, when the events of it are contrasted with your very unusual experience and versatility. I envy you all of your delightful associations, which must have come to you through such advantages as you have had. You have gained something which is a part of yourself, which can

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never be taken away from you, and which will always be a source for the renewal of interest in life.”

Although Maxine had seen the world, from San Francisco to Cairo, and from Bagdad to the Persian Gulf, she had never violated the inner woman; and she never, for an instant, permitted others, of lesser opportunities, to feel ill-at-ease in her presence.

“Provincialism is by no means confined to the dweller in a city or town remote from the great centers of population. It is found quite as often in a big metropolis.

“In fact, there is no conceit which quite equals that of those who spend their lives in a great city, and who are perfectly satisfied with its urbane limitations. They become so self-centered that they believe that people from smaller places must be narrow-minded, merely because they have never lived in a groove of conventional urbanity,” commented Maxine.

“You are quite right. You always find provincialism where men and women do not think enough. Nowhere is it more noticeable than among a certain class of apparently well educated individuals, who regard the kind of education which they possess as the only kind worth having.

“When Seward entered Lincoln’s cabinet, he looked upon the President as a provincial back-woodsman, but after a while, Seward came to recognize that Lincoln’s intellect was superior to his own, and, in fact, that Lincoln possessed a keener creative quality than that of any other American contemporary,” Richard replied.

“Yes, provincialism arises from a lack of sympathy, — from a lack of understanding of others. It is always the hallmark of a narrow mind, whether it belongs to the educated, or the half-educated, or to the ignorant; — it always stands in the way of any great achievement.

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"We can never do anything of consequence for people, unless we know them. We can never know them if we, in any degree, despise, or fail to appreciate them," concluded Maxine.

"Right again; I am forming the conclusion that you are always right; but I can't understand yet how it is that you have stored up so much common sense, — so much proverbial compact wisdom, — in so few years.

"For Goodness' sake, the party is beginning to break up. There must have been a hundred more guests who came after the dinner, — judging from those who seem to be leaving now. They must have kept coming all the evening. I had no idea that it was so late!" ejaculated Richard, as he looked at his watch. They had been talking earnestly for some time.

"So here you are! I've been looking all over for you!" exclaimed Pratt Dickinson, as he entered one of the alcoves off the ball-room.

"What are they all leaving for?" queried Richard. "It isn't so late! Situated as I am, I never want to go home."

"They're not all leaving, — just a few of the younger set, who have their instructions to come home early, and some of the older ones who begin to lose their 'pep' at the approach of midnight. Now is just the time when the rest of us, who are in fit condition, can enjoy ourselves, after the crowd gets away.

"Come on, Miss Marling. They're playing a waltz now," suggested Dickinson.

"Yes, that's Kreisler's Old Vienna Waltz, 'Love's Sorrow'," said Maxine. "Goodnight, Mr. Radcliffe. I do hope that I'll meet you again," she said with an emphasis, which indicated clearly that she meant what she said.

"Goodnight, indeed, the pleasure was all mine," responded Richard, while he pressed Maxine's hand a little more

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closely than was necessary for a merely formal goodnight.

As the party broke up, it was most apparent that the directing hand of the hostess had provided for an evening's entertainment, which had not been climaxed by the excess in drinking stimulants, which generally accompanied the society events of Mount Olympic.

Loyola Hargreaves had taken care that the contents of the punch bowl were only moderately flavored with the best brandy.

Some of the boys of the younger smart set had carried to the party, flasks on the hip; but they had been restrained from excessive indulgence, by the girls, whose respect for Mrs. Hargreaves was nothing short of adoration.

CHAPTER VIII

Richard Radcliffe Asserts Himself

“**I**’M HAVIN’ my own troubles at home. Mandy she done gone and sued me for a divorce.

“Marriage sure does spoil many love affairs. There am too much propinquity in marriage. The deceit and extravagance of the wimmin, and the uprisin’ of the beast in the men, destroys the concord.

“The flavorality of the cream takes away the dongtongtation of the coffee, renderin’ the taste abscruise.” Thus spoke Rastus Riddlehouse, who, for the past five years, had been employed as usher in the offices of Richard Radcliffe.

“I ain’t goin’ to offer no defense, — except to try to get the alimony down as low as possible. I want to talk with you about this, Mr. Radcliffe, whenever you have a little leisure,” continued Rastus, while he drew his right hand, nervously, through his natural marcel of well-kept, glossy, black hair.

“See me right after luncheon, before you let anyone else in. I’ll try to straighten you out, then,” said Richard Radcliffe, while he reserved to himself the deliberations on the experiment of matrimony, which Rastus’ remarks had incited in his own mind.

It seemed like a strange coincidence, that Rastus should have chosen to unburden himself so frankly to his master, on the very morning after the dinner party at the Worth-

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ington-Hargreaves', — so soon after Richard Radcliffe had, rather indirectly, but nevertheless, unmistakably, disclosed the great secret of his life to Maxine Marling.

Later in the day, when Rastus narrated, in his employer's office, the sorry tale of his marital discord, he concluded his story by saying: "She just done nagged me to death. If I don't happen to be right on time, — that is, if I'm delayed, unavoidably, in the office, for some uncontrollable reason, — and am late gettin' home to dinner, — she done find so much fault that it just spoils the evenin' for me.

"We both stood it just as long as we can, but we're so incompatible that there's no use of tryin' any longer. We're both proud. Neither of us likes the disgrace of gettin' a divorce; — but there's nothin' else to do. I s'pose that it'll just ruin our social position; — but I can't help it. You know I'se a deacon in the church; — and I'll proba'ly be censured by the Board of Deacons; — but they just don't know, — you don't know, — nobody knows, what I've been through.

"Of course, your world, Mr. Radcliffe, is entirely different from mine, — but in my way of looking at it, my social position is just as important to me, as yours is, — to a man of your dignity and position. I know you see just what I'm up against, and that you'll try to make things as easy as you can for me, — and use your influence wherever you can to have a good word said for me."

Little did poor Rastus realize that, in thus rehearsing the story of his own, discordant, married life, he was narrating, in sequence, many incidents which ran closely parallel to many of the experiences in his master's own matrimonial career.

In any event, Rastus' story, set into vibration, a truly sympathetic cord, in Richard Radcliffe's heart; and it fol-

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lowed that during this crucial period in Rastus' life, there was no client of the Radcliffe offices, who received more consideration, or better service, in bringing his case to a satisfactory conclusion.

That evening, when Richard arrived home, about a quarter of an hour late for dinner, — his tardiness having been due to a conference, which he had had after office hours, with Ralph Phipps, a young attorney, who was clerking in the Radcliffe offices, he was confronted by Eleanor with the fact that her domestic plans had been completely disarranged by his dilatory behavior.

Richard had been instructing Phipps as to the best method of procedure to be followed in Rastus' case. It occurred to Richard that he might explain this situation to Eleanor; — but, after sober, second thought, he decided that such an explanation would not bring forth her tolerance, interest, or sympathy; — but, rather, it would bring upon himself, censure, and even ridicule, for permitting one of his employees, of such inferior rank, to inflict such an imposition upon him. So Richard kept his silence, as for many years, he had been accustomed to do, when such occurrences arose.

“Hargreaves was in the office today. He is thinking of becoming a candidate for Congress. If he does, I shall do everything possible to help him to realize his political ambition. If he goes to Washington, it will mean that I will have a great deal more to do than I have now, in the administration of his affairs. This will mean much hard work and more responsibility for me. I shall have to make more frequent trips East to look after his interests there, and to keep in close touch with his office in Washington. Of course, this will bring me in a larger income, even, than I have ever

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received from him before; but I'm getting to the point, where, if I could have my own way, I would discourage any attempt to increase the volume of business in my office, — and I would, gradually get things where I would be able to take life a little more easily," commented Richard, directly after he and Eleanor were seated at the dinner table.

"Well, they say that most men, who retire from business early, meet with untimely deaths. My father always said that there was much truth in the old saying: 'It is much better to wear out than to rust out'," replied Eleanor, in a rather short, curt tone of voice.

"Who said anything about retiring? You do get the most inexplicable ideas into your head of anyone whom I ever saw. It's damn strange, merely because I suggested that if Hargreaves were to be elected to Congress, I would necessarily have to be busier with his affairs, — that you should jump to the conclusion that I had any idea of retiring. I only meant to give the impression that I do not wish to add to my clients, or to invite business which will make it necessary for me to give any of my time to the interests of new people. I simply can not do justice to any more clients. I do not need them, and I do not want them; — but, of course, I would be too loyal to Hargreaves' interests to refuse to render him any service within my power," explained Richard, while he indulged the hope that he had clarified matters to Eleanor's satisfaction.

"Well, you used to say that you couldn't be contented to place any limitations upon yourself, — that you believed yourself capable of going just as far, in achieving distinction and in accumulating wealth, as any other man," remarked Eleanor, in such a way as to remind Richard that

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he might possibly be losing his strenuous grip on the sterner facts of life.

“Yes, but you must admit that I have no great incentive in my life, for the achievement of bigger things. Years ago, when I was so inordinately ambitious, you used to tell me that if a man had enough to keep him busy, and could make sufficient money to insure him a comfortable old age, that he ought to be satisfied.”

“I don’t know what you mean, when you say you have no great incentive for working any longer. I should think that the satisfaction of accomplishing something, would be so well-worth looking forward to, that, that alone, would furnish you with all the incentive which you would need,” she said reprovingly.

“Your theory is all right, as an abstract proposition, but it falls short, when applied on a concrete basis.

“For instance, I have no children to take pride in my achievements. That inspiration is lacking in my life. For the last few years, I have been rather inclined to proceed along the line of least resistance. If I can help Hargreaves, any, in his efforts to achieve distinction in public service, I shall look upon it as a privilege. Whatever may be said of him, he has both appreciation and gratitude, in his make-up. His talents may not be much above the average, and his capacity for statesmanship is, no doubt, limited; but, at the same time, if he is elected to office, I am sure that he will be loyal to the interests of his constituents, and grateful to those who are instrumental in putting him into office.

“He tells me that Mrs. Hargreaves is very much interested to have him succeed in political life, and that she is his chief inspiration. It seems that her friend, Miss Marling, has had considerable experience as a student of economics,

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and a writer on political subjects. Loyola thought that Miss Marling could give Hargreaves some valuable suggestions directly from the school of her own training, because she has contacted, at close hand, many of the most prominent men and women in public life. Her associations have been very broad. She has had entree to many of the best social sets of the world, and she has hobnobbed with the most representative people in several of the big capitals, — especially, in Rome, Paris, London, New York and Washington.

“I think it’s mighty broad of Loyola to look so far ahead in figuring out things to help Hargreaves along. One thing is certain, he appreciates Loyola. Men often say that he is mediocre; but I don’t call it mediocrity, when a man has the judgment to listen to the right people, and to seek advice from the right sources. In fact, I classify that sort of ability as a kind of genius. Genius, you know, sees opportunity at a glance. Talent comprehends more slowly; and I call it genius, when a man is willing to solicit and accept the best advice he can get,” concluded Richard.

“Well, I don’t see what he needs of that Miss Marling to help him. I should think that he would have to depend, for his assistance, upon the people in his own community, and your management of his campaign.”

“Miss Marling has had most extraordinary opportunities for observing the processes of finesse and strategy, in the science of politics. She has a woman’s intuition, which accentuates her own peculiar, mental acuteness; — so, in that way, her assistance to Hargreaves will be invaluable.

“Under the circumstances, I think it would be a rather fitting compliment, if we were to entertain, at a dinner party, in honor of Miss Marling. The Hargreaves have very seldom been invited to dine in our home, and I think, this time, that

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instead of going to the Club, we had better try to have them here," suggested Richard.

"Well, you know that is out of the question, with only one servant in the house."

"I don't see why you don't get another servant. For several years now, I have been suggesting that you should keep a second girl, and if two servants can not take care of the house properly, I want you to have three.

"Every time that I suggest having company, I'm tired of hearing you say that you can't do it, because you haven't enough help. You always offer that as an excuse for not entertaining our friends," remonstrated Richard.

"It is so much trouble to break in new helpers, and teach them, that I prefer to do with only Freida. I have no desire to branch out, and make a practice of entertaining. I don't intend to wear myself out in social activities," replied Eleanor, somewhat impatiently.

"Well," continued Richard, "if I will hire DeJeanne, the caterer, to take charge of things, will you have the Worthington-Hargreaves and Miss Marling, and some of our other friends, to dinner, some time next week?"

"I don't see any reason for going to all that trouble. I don't know why we should be called upon to go to a large amount of expense for an elaborate entertainment, in honor of someone who is only here, temporarily, as a guest of the Hargreaves. I don't think they would expect any such thing," answered Eleanor, who was somewhat shocked at Richard's extravagant suggestion.

"I don't look at it that way. The Hargreaves have always included us, whenever they have given any noteworthy, social event, in their home. They have entertained us a great deal more than we have ever entertained them.

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Besides, we nearly always take them to the Club, whenever we do entertain them. For my part, I can see no reason why we should not have them in our home oftener.

“It seems to me, when I consider the amount of money which we have tied up in this place, that we ought to be equipped to share our home, more often, with our friends. We might just as well live in a hotel, so far as home privileges are concerned. In a hotel, I would have greater freedom and liberty in entertaining. I worked for many years, in order to be able to provide this kind of a home, and so far as I can see, we might just as well have remained in our cottage, — that is, estimating things from the standpoint of comfort and convenience.

“I have made up my mind that I want to have the Hargreaves and Miss Marling here to dinner. I think I’m entitled to that much self-indulgence in my own pleasure. If you don’t want them here, I will engage a private dining-room, at the Club, and have DeJeanne serve one of his most elaborate dinners. I will spend a great deal more than it would be necessary to do, if we were to entertain our friends here; — but I am determined to carry out my plan to give a dinner for the Hargreaves and Miss Marling, — and to make it an event, which will compare favorably with the standards of entertainment, which the Hargreaves are accustomed to give. Now, it’s up to you to say, whether we shall have it here, or whether I shall make arrangements tomorrow morning to have the dinner at the Club,” concluded Richard, with a firmness and self-assertion, which made Eleanor realize that Richard’s mind was made up.

“Well, if you insist, I think we can manage to have it here at the house,” assented Eleanor.

“Very well, I’ll see DeJeanne, then, and tell him to

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come up here to talk it over with you. Now, understand, that I don't want you to spare any expense in making this event distinctive in every way.'" These were Richard's final instructions, which Eleanor determined that she would carry out; but, at the same time, she assured Richard that her consent to give this function, should not be understood as establishing a precedent, which she would follow in the future.

The dinner at the Richard Radcliffes', which occurred on Tuesday evening, of the following week, was a success, — much more of a success, in fact, than Richard had anticipated.

DeJeanne did his best, — a little better than his usual best. Every course, from the Potage Saint Germain to the Caviar and Squab, with the vegetable accompaniments and relishes, was palatable and appetizing. The Waldorf Salad and Maple Frango, the latter, DeJeanne's special confection, were prepared with all the skill, which that connoisseur of artistic cookery, could command, and represented the Chef's highest skill in aesthetic proficiency.

The center-piece was a uniquely designed Wistaria Arbor, in miniature, combined with violets and sweetheart roses. The corsages were carmine red roses, surrounded by violets. Eleanor had deliberated, for some time, before she decided upon these expensive decorations, for it was a season of the year when only hot-house violets could be procured, and while she almost staggered in amazement, when DeJeanne quoted his prices for the flowers, — at the same time, her sense of the artistic asserted itself and predominated over her innate, economical tendency, — as it had done both times in her life, when she had found herself called upon to furnish the cottage, in which they began house-

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keeping, and later, the more elaborate dwelling, which was now their home.

Eleanor had almost fainted, when Richard brought home from the Club, some carefully selected, choice liquors, from his private stock. She was simply horrified at the idea of serving intoxicating drinks in her home, and all of her conservative traditions revolted against the thought of breaking the law in their State. Once more, however, Richard insisted upon having his own way, with the result, that the Martini Cocktails, Dubonnet Wine, and Brandy Cordial added, not a little, to the conviviality of the conversation around the table.

Maxine was seated at Richard's right. She wore a soft Charmeuse evening gown of turquoise blue, trimmed with narrow strips of beaver fur. She looked so rested and refreshed, that her animated features radiated a glow and warmth and interest in living, which was so full of spontaneity, that her very presence was an inspiration.

Eleanor, who presided at the other end of the table, at which there were seated twelve guests, not including the host and hostess, was rather nervous, and kept a watchful eye on every movement of DeJeanne and his helpers. This nervousness, however, imparted a healthful color to her cheeks, which afforded a pleasing contrast with her very stunning, black velvet gown, trimmed with rare, old Venetian lace medallions.

"I've been looking forward to the pleasure of seeing you again, ever since the dinner at the Hargreaves. If I thought that it were possible for you to look any better than you did on that occasion, I would say that you look better tonight than you did then. I hope you've been enjoying yourself, since you've had an opportunity to recuperate from

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the fatigue of your long journey across the continent," remarked Richard to Maxine, as soon as they were seated at the table.

"Yes, indeed; and I hope that life has been just full and brimming over with good things for you, ever since I saw you," she replied, with her usual animation of expression.

"Oh, things have been tolerably good, — just about so so, — nothing at all to go crazy about.

"As I told you, when we had our little visit, — we provincial people have to be satisfied, from day to day, with the average busy hum-drum of life, — without hitting the high spots very often.

"We are different from you Easterners, who are so accustomed to seeing, and hearing, and knowing, about everything and everybody.

"But when you have such numerous opportunities for experiencing so much, do you ever feel, — of course, I know you don't, — because you have such a keen interest in everything, — but I mean, don't you think that many people, who have the advantages of great breadth of association, nearly always have their sensibilities deadened, by excessive enjoyment, so that they become blasé?"

"Yes, there is a great deal in what you have just said. The effete East, while it has, by no means, become exhausted in its energies, — has a certain surfeit of excess, which sometimes cloy, — and yet, there are many people in the world whose lives have been full of varied experiences, who have never indulged themselves to the point of satiety, in the so-called, sophisticated pursuits of life."

"And you are one of those people? I envy you your capacity for sustained enjoyment, and the freedom of your soul from the awful fate of boredom with life. Do you

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think that you can hold out to the end of the game with your same fresh outlook in the art of living?" he queried.

"Well, of course, it is always dangerous to say what one will, and will not, do, in the future. I wouldn't like to commit myself by any rash assurances; but, at the same time, I have a strong faith, based upon what I believe to be the animating, guiding principle of my life, that I will be able to hold out, as you say, to the end, with the earnest conviction that whatever is best for me will always enter my consciousness at the right time, so that I will be able to initiate and follow whatever course of action will result in my highest interest. I believe that this principle, of which I speak, is an innately, vital part of everyone, and that it will always enable us to make the right decisions for ourselves, if we will only permit ourselves to be guided by it," she concluded, very earnestly.

"That is a very wonderful philosophy. I wish that I could believe in it as strongly as you do. It has evidently taken hold of you, — and, if it would do for me as much as it is obvious that it has done for you, I would strive, with all the force of my being, to embrace your refreshing, vitalizing theory of life."

"It is very simple, — so simple, that one has only to resign one's self passively to its ruling principle, — and then, just know that everything will work out according to this rule, for one's greatest interest and satisfaction and happiness."

"Your theory is not only optimistic, but progressive. According to it, nothing in the universe can ever be lost or wasted," he said, thoughtfully.

"Doesn't everything in nature, — in the harmony of the whole universe, — sustain directly the theory of universal

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economy, — in the distribution of nature's benefits, and in the application of her unalterable laws?"

"Yes, it does, — only few people observe this, thoughtfully. They don't, as a rule, stop to get any lesson from this. We are all so busy with our own petty, material affairs, that we don't heed, as we should, the multitude of obvious teachings of the Creator, which are right at our door."

"We'll discuss all these things more fully at some future time, I hope," she said, in an interested manner, just before she turned to speak to Pratt Dickinson, who, up to this time, had been entertaining, with his usual line of small talk, little Priscilla Payette. Just at this instant, there was a lull in the conversation, and Maxine's sense of politeness restrained her, for the time, from continuing her conversation with her very interesting host.

Pratt Dickinson's vanity had been somewhat wounded, by Maxine's apparent, absorbing interest in Richard Radcliffe's conversation, at the beginning of the dinner, — especially since Dickinson had taken it upon himself to bestow many courtesies upon Maxine, by complimenting her by giving a luncheon at the Olympic Club in her honor, and by inviting her to play golf with him at the Country Club. Dickinson was so accustomed to have his attentions to women flatteringly received, that he was always quick to observe any apathetic, or indifferent attitude of his social favorites.

Maxine possessed a frankness of manner, which was refreshing, but, at the same time, she was keenly observant of the amenities of social intercourse, and so desirous of being agreeable that she often sacrificed, for the moment, the pleasure of conversing with someone whom she really liked,

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for the sake of expressing, or furthering pleasantness, or smoothness in affable society.

With all her frankness, she understood the art of feeding the vanity of men. All men liked her. She had a very astute faculty for recognizing the best and strongest attributes of their characters; and an equally tactful quality in never, apparently, observing or remarking upon their faults.

She had studied social diplomacy, until, to her, it had become a science. She had sensitized her mind and soul to such a degree, that she had more feeling than characterizes most women; — even the best women. Men understood her better than women; they liked her better, too. But all women observed and studied her with keen interest, because many of them knew, in their own hearts, that she possessed something which they lacked and which men liked. The great mystery, among her women friends and acquaintances, was to determine, definitely, this unknown attribution. Other women, of supposed remarkable beauty and attractiveness, were often neglected, while she was courted and admired.

Her companionability made her lovable. She had a powerful, quick, sympathetic understanding, and a sensitiveness, which enabled her to communicate this instantly to others. Such understanding is a greater feminine asset than mere conventional beauty or meteoric brilliancy. With it all she had tolerance, a pleasant maturity, — and a settled mentality. In the words of one of her admirers, she was Joy and Cheerfulness and Laughter and Optimism, with just the right proportion of these ingredients combined in one personality. She could be equally entertaining and interesting to the man, who needed only a listener, or, to the one, who preferred a tincture of feminine wisdom, now and then, and the stimulation of a woman's wit. She knew too much to

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over-awe men by what she knew, and they knew it, and applauded her cleverness.

She knew, too, that which every woman ought to know, that in the competition which exists among women, for the attentions and devotion and protection of men, that when any woman, married or single, fails to cultivate any essential feminine attribute, womanly grace or attraction, necessary to hold her admirer, lover or husband, that there is always somewhere in the world "ANOTHER WOMAN," sufficiently wide-awake to her opportunities, to acquire for herself that special charm, or combination of charms, which will win and hold the affections of that particular man. She realized, too, that many women, either because of too much self-confidence, or because they do not appreciate the keenness of the competition, fail to make the most of themselves, in some part of their development, — physically, mentally, or spiritually.

Maxine knew that this was true of many of her married women friends, who had lapsed back, as it were, through their failure to keep themselves up to pre-marriage standards of appearance, animation and interest. They had, in too many cases, taken it for granted that because an honorable man had promised, forever, to love, cherish and protect them, that that was all there was to it. They had failed to realize that in matrimony, as in a business or profession, one must make good every day if a high standard of success is to be achieved. They had gone too much upon the theory of passive acquiescence to the commonplace, instead of awaking to the fact that a happy marriage, like every other good thing in life, must be earned.

Maxine had resolved, if possible, to escape the tragedy of an unhappy marriage; — in fact, it was second nature to her to try to keep out of trouble. If she had not been able

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to rely upon her own mental resources and ideal disposition for happiness, she would have been very lonely at times; but, fortunately, her intensely social personality, always brought her agreeable companionship.

Following the dinner at the Richard-Radcliffes, the party retired to the parlor and library, where they played auction. Richard saw to it, that he should have Maxine for a partner. They won five rubbers out of seven, scoring heavily, both above and below the line. In the last hand, the player at Richard's left dealt, and made the first bid two hearts. Maxine, who sat directly opposite Richard, doubled the hearts. The player at her left bid three spades. Richard said three no-trumps. This was doubled by his adversary. Richard doubled him back and played the hand so skilfully that he made a grand slam;—thus carrying off, with Maxine, the highest honors of the evening.

A few days after this event at the Radcliffes, Edith Compton invited Eleanor to attend a matinee with her. It was a performance of Robert Mantell in *Macbeth*. Mrs. Compton had not been able to get her tickets until Wednesday morning, and so, she had invited Eleanor at the last moment.

In speaking of the theatrical attractions, which were offered in Mount Olympic, let it be understood that this town was, after all, a real city of many cosmopolitan features, and that its name constitutes only a simile, which will afford an opportunity for an imaginative comparison with just such a city, as, in reality, exists on the Pacific coast.

Edith Compton and Eleanor took their seats in the Majestic Theatre just before the curtain rose. Eleanor glanced across the aisle at her left, and observed in the second row forward, the back of a man's head, which seemed

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to her strangely familiar. Then, suddenly, she knew it was Richard.

“How strange!” she thought. “He never attended a matinee, to my knowledge, unless it was a vaudeville performance, and then, only on Saturdays,” Eleanor said to herself.

She had never known him to leave his business for any amusement, outside of the Club, on a week-day. He had not mentioned to her that he intended to go to the theatre; and now, as Eleanor looked to the right of Richard, she noticed that her husband was talking to a woman, who, as she turned her head, to Eleanor’s surprise, — proved to be Maxine Marling. And they seemed to be having such a good time, too.

Eleanor was, at once, ill at ease, — unhappy; in fact, wretched. She hoped that Edith Compton would not observe Richard and Maxine. Evidently, Edith didn’t. If she did, she was too considerate of Eleanor’s feelings to make mention of it.

This was the first time in Eleanor Radcliffe’s life when any incident had ever diverted her interest from a Shakespearean play, but so far as she was concerned, — she did not know whether Lady Macbeth was walking in her sleep or tight-rope dancing, — when it came time for this remarkable, dramatic interpretation.

All the Scotch history, which Eleanor had ever known, seemed to fade from her memory. Malcolm might have been the King of Scotland, or the hero or the villain, for all that she knew.

All that she wanted was to have the curtain rung down on the fifth act, without Edith Compton’s detecting that Richard and Maxine were in each other’s company.

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After more than three hours of actual torture, commingled with alternating emotions of fear, anxiety; disgust and anger; the inevitable moment came, and it seemed to Eleanor that she had lived as many years that afternoon as were in the epochs of all the Scottish history from Duncan to Malcolm. She bade Edith a cordial good-bye, saying that she must hasten home, as it was Freida's day out, for that particular week, and that she, herself, must prepare the dinner.

Just as Eleanor was ascending the steps, leading to her home, she heard the telephone ring. She unlocked the door hurriedly, — entered the hall, and took the receiver to her ear.

It was Richard.

"I only wanted to say that I am detained by an important business engagement, and I will not be home for dinner.

"I know that it is Freida's day out, so you will not mind, and it will save you the trouble of getting dinner."

"Very well," said Eleanor, in a very cool, reserved tone. "I suppose you will be here about nine o'clock?" Even under this circumstance, Eleanor was too mindful of the proprieties of social conventions to bring up any matters of domestic delicacy on the telephone.

"I can not tell when I will be home," answered Richard. "The matter is of great moment, and it is indefinite as to when I shall be able to break away, — but I will be home as soon as I can get there. Good-bye."

Richard hung up the receiver.

Eleanor had the first suspicions of her life, — except for the time when Richard had taken Helen Hammond home, many years before. However, at that time, she had accepted

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Richard's explanation, as the whole truth, — and in her final conclusions, she had completely dismissed the matter. Now, she believed that Richard was actually misleading and deceiving her about some of his engagements.

How many times had he done this before? What was really keeping him? With whom was he spending his time at this very moment?

All these questions passed through Eleanor's mind in rapid succession. And now, what would she say when he returned home? She remembered that she had been very hasty at the time of the Helen Hammond incident. Possibly, now, if she were to hold on to herself, Richard would make some satisfactory explanation, which would clear up matters.

In any event, she had the evening in which to think the situation over. It would probably be better to wait and give Richard an opportunity to say something first; — but if he didn't tell her frankly, — a straightforward story, as to how he had spent the afternoon and evening, — then she would open up on him with all the verbal artillery of which her unlimited vocabulary was capable.

After several hours of feverish and painful uneasiness and worry, which had prevented her from occupying herself otherwise, — Eleanor heard Richard's footsteps on the veranda. It was nearly midnight.

“Bicknell was in town tonight, and we had to go over that matter about the franchises; but I had no idea that it would take until this hour!

“He couldn't get into town until after dinner; so he called me on the long distance about noon, and told me of his delay. This broke up my plans for the afternoon; — so I decided that I would go to see Macbeth. You know I haven't seen a Shakespearean play in a good many years. I tried

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to get you on the telephone, after I heard from Bicknell, but they said you didn't answer, and so I made up my mind that I would go alone. I was late getting my ticket, of course, — and when I took my seat, — who should happen to be sitting next to me, — but Miss Marling, — Loyola's friend. I'm sorry that I couldn't get you, because I know how you enjoy Shakespeare," apologized Richard, after he had seated himself in front of the fire-place.

"I went out early to do some marketing. Just before I started, Edith telephoned to me and invited me to go with her to see *Macbeth*; so I went down town to do some errands and did not come back home until after the matinee," replied Eleanor, — her fears and suspicions now being entirely allayed.

"Well, where did you sit?" queried Richard.

"In the fifth row, right side aisle," answered Eleanor.

"Well, it was strange we didn't see each other," commented Richard.

"Oh, I don't know. We went in just before the curtain. The house was very dark, — and during the intermission, we were so busy, discussing the parts and characters, that I didn't look around much," replied Eleanor, in a nonchalant manner, — her pride preventing her from acknowledging to Richard, — that she would ever, for one moment, believe that he would invite another woman to attend the theatre with him, — without Eleanor, herself, being present. Anyway, there would be no point, she thought, in letting Richard know that she had seen him, — because, he would have at once asked her the question, — Well, what did you think when you saw us? Or he might have said: You must have thought it mighty strange! So, Eleanor

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thought it most discreet to let the occurrence pass, without further comments.

“I have a mighty hard day ahead of me tomorrow. There is a big fight on over the renewal of the franchises of the street railway company. Mayor Buell is such an agitator that he has the public all stirred up, over municipal ownership of public utilities. I don’t know how matters will turn out. I understand that the radicals in town have their plans all made for a general strike, and that they are going to tie up transportation and all other public conveniences, so far as possible. All the employees, who decide to join the strikers, will challenge to combat all the non-strikers, and those who volunteer to take the places made vacant by those who stop work. That means that the street car and telephone service will be shut off. I understand, too, that all the waiters in the restaurants and hotels of the city, intend to walk out.

“For my part, I have no patience with any movement which stirs up forces of destructive discontent. I believe in constructive discontent, because that will inspire men and women to better their condition; but I can not see any merit in militant or violent methods.

“In any event, I do not propose to stand by and sanction unruly and unlawful conduct, in the administration of the every-day services to which the public is entitled. Today, a committee of men waited upon Mayor Buell and requested him to appoint me chairman of a Committee of Public Welfare, — the purpose of which is to see that there shall be no coercive, or forceful interference with the service of Public Utilities. I intend, as the Chief Executive of this Committee, to use my full authority to enforce the orderly processes of the law. I anticipate that there will be plenty of trouble.

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The situation looks very bad tonight, — so I am going to bed and try to get a good night's sleep," Richard informed Eleanor, just as she had come to the conclusion not to mention further the incidents in connection with their attendance at the theatre that afternoon.

The next morning, when Richard was only a few blocks from home, driving his car down town, he observed that the Radicals had carried out all of their threats of the previous day. There were no street cars running. He drove a little farther along, and noticed that all the patrons of public dining-rooms were being turned away, by the refusal of service. As soon as he reached his office, he found the telephone service also cut off. In a few minutes, Roger Blakeman, who was still Prosecuting Attorney for Olympic County, arrived at Radcliffe's office to inform him that matters were rapidly approaching a very critical stage. Blakeman reported that large numbers of the strikers were already armed, and that they proposed, by the force of arms, to prevent the non-strikers and substitute workers from performing their duties. It was inevitable that, within a few hours, the situation would amount to civil war. Something must be done at once.

"You know, Blakeman, that I have never done much with a gun. I have never been a crack-shot as a hunter. You can beat me all out at that game. I never threatened a man's life but once, — and then my gun wasn't even loaded; — but I felt so sure that the man whom I threatened was an absolute coward, — that I knew I could call his bluff without committing any act of violence.

"Now I believe that I can restore order out of this chaos, without even carrying an unloaded gun. I am not afraid to try it, anyway. You say that there is a great mass

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of people around the City Hall. I think I will make a speech from the top steps, and see what I can do," Radcliffe assured Blakeman, and then walked over to the coat-room off his office, put on his soft, gray, felt hat, and started toward the door.

On their way to the City Hall, Radcliffe spoke very earnestly, concerning the necessity of deputizing a large number of subordinates, who should be vested with the authority to make arrests and lodge in jail, all strikers or disturbers of the peace, who interfered with the non-strikers and volunteer workers.

"That is going to be a very difficult thing to do, if they resort to resistance by the use of fire-arms," commented Blakeman, who lacked much of the physical courage, fiery imagination, and intensely forceful personality, of Richard Radcliffe.

"We can never fail in anything,—we can never fall down in any undertaking, unless we first admit failure to ourselves. Undisciplined men of distorted vision, commonplace imagination, and cowardly motives attempt to gain their ends by just such weak, destructive methods, as these strikers are using. They look upon coercion as their most powerful weapon, for getting what they want,—when, as a matter of fact, they could accomplish their desired results to better advantage, if they would work gradually to build up a higher standard of efficiency and a more substantial,—finer ideal of service," concluded Radcliffe, while he and Blakeman made their way through the City Hall, to the spot where Richard proposed to address the disorganized, unkempt, erratic mob.

As soon as Radcliffe faced the crowd, cries of "Down with him!" "Put him out!" "We won't listen to that Pluto-

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crat!” “Throw him down the steps!” and so on, emanated from the angry, tempestuous mass of revolting men and women, who thronged the streets and open spaces, surrounding the City Hall.

Radcliffe raised his hand. It was a well-groomed, soft, pliable hand. There was a magnetism about it, which was in keeping with the magnetic quality of his stern, dominating, relentless figure, which radiated so much of force, courage and poise. That he was an unusually well-balanced individual was obvious, even to the most illiterate and unlearned.

“Every man has the right to quit employment and every man has the right to seek employment. I sympathize with every man and woman who really wants to improve the conditions under which they live. But is there any man or woman here who is so weak that he is willing to admit that he can not improve himself and his way of living, without resorting to breaking the law by violence? I can not believe that any man among you has such a feeble imagination, — so little conception of the right kind of freedom, — such a narrow, cramped vision, that he will voluntarily put himself in a class of men, who believe that they can only gain advancement in life, by resorting to the methods used by ordinary criminals. If, you men who have just refused to work, can truthfully say to yourselves that you have tried in every possible way to perform your labors as thoroughly and skilfully as it is within your ability and power to perform them, — then, there is some measure of justification for your dissatisfaction with the results which you are getting; — but, if there is any man among you who has not rendered the best service of which he is capable, then, there can be no justice in that man’s erratic discontent and unreasonable outburst of wrath against his employer. A man who does

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his work as well as it can be done is deserving of promotion and reward. A man who does not perform his tasks as well as he is capable of doing, does not deserve an opportunity to remain a factor in the industrial world.

“Every man owes it to himself to maintain a vigorous, wholesome self-respect. He can not claim this attribute of character if his conduct forces him to admit that he is too weak to make a comfortable living, without resorting to violating the law, and to the extreme measures of preventing a brother workman from taking his place, when he, himself, refuses to work.

“You all know that there is another, still bigger duty, which every citizen owes to the community in which he lives, and that is the obligation to make life as tolerable, and livable, and happy, as possible, for every one else. Everyone must do his part, in order to make any town or city the right kind of a place in which to live.

“I have been appointed by the Mayor to serve as Chairman of the Committee on Public Welfare, and I have come here to seek the assistance and cooperation of every man who is listening to me, and of every man whom you may have an opportunity to tell of my request.

“I want you to help me give to this town an enviable reputation for peace, and order, and prosperity. If you are willing to help me to do this, I feel confident that our industries will take on new life, and that this city will become a great center of constructive activity and permanent, civic and industrial progress.

“I have been given the job of restoring order among you. I hope that it will not be necessary for me to appeal to force, in order to overcome the prevailing disorder and disturbance. However, in the event, that there are those

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among you of such unruly and ungovernable spirit that you will make it necessary for us to combat your opposition and law-breaking, by forceful methods, I have given an order to the officers of the law to increase the number of their deputies, sufficiently, to enable them to take care of any incorrigible offenders.

“If there is anyone among you who expects that he can make half as much trouble for anyone else as we are already prepared to make for him, in the event of his resistance to lawful authority, I respectfully suggest that he can only save himself for future usefulness by getting himself outside of our city limits as soon as his legs can carry him,” and with this final, decisive, positive utterance, Richard Radcliffe retired, amidst the roaring, vociferous cheers of the multitude, which had listened to him with awe and wonder.

There was no further outbreak of violence. Things were just naturally brought to rights again, by the most quiet, orderly processes of law and behavior.

There was some mumbling and grumbling, of course, among those of such irreconcilable spirit, that their better natures were impervious to a strong, straightforward appeal.

The personality of an unconquerable soul had triumphed over a radical, revolutionary, unbalanced mob. When it came to a question of battling with life, Radcliffe was a born fighter, not for the sake of the fight, but for the victory which he won by it. He was a born optimist. In the gravest emergencies, his courage or hopes never failed him. There was still in his character and make-up the same capacity for finesse and strategy, — the same rigid determination, — the same indomitable resolution, — and the same steadfastness of purpose and soul, which had helped him to win the case

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for Lem Simpkins, and which had enabled him to save the life of Red Feather Alki.

But with all of Radcliffe's masterfulness of character, with all of his ability to command obedience, when he told one man to go and another to come, — there was one thing in his life with which he had never been able to cope successfully.

CHAPTER IX

Richard and Maxine

“SO YOU think you won’t attend the meeting in the Auditorium with me tonight? You know this is the last night before election, and I think that Hargreaves will win by a big majority tomorrow, even if the rest of the National ticket falls down,” remarked Richard, while he placed a fir log on the hearth, — so as to keep the fire going until he would return late in the evening from the campaign rally.

“No, I don’t believe that I will go. I have heard Hargreaves speak and I have read so much about the issues in this campaign, that I don’t imagine there will be anything really new presented tonight,” answered Eleanor, while she continued to knit on a soft, white wool sweater.

“Yes, I know that you’ve heard Hargreaves, — but you haven’t heard Miss Marling make a speech yet. She’s really made a remarkably effective campaign in all of the Pacific Coast States. She has been featured everywhere by the National Committee. They say that her arguments are very original, and that she presents them with wit and logic; — so I’m very anxious to hear what she has to say.

“Hargreaves tells me that she is very different from the average woman speaker, because she does not play so much upon what we men call the ‘Sob Sister’ issues. Her political acumen is unusually keen. I think you’re really missing it,

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by staying at home tonight," commented Richard, while he donned his big ulster top-coat, preparatory to leaving the house.

"I'm not the least bit interested in hearing any woman make a political speech. That sort of thing has never appealed to me," replied Eleanor, who was as true to her conservative, political teachings, as she had always been to her reactionary traditions.

"As a rule, women speakers have not appealed to me, either; — but if Miss Marling is as good a campaign speaker as she is brilliant as a conversationalist, then, I am perfectly willing to listen to her," concluded Richard, just as he opened the door.

On this eventful night, Maxine Marling was scheduled to speak from the same platform with the Senior United States Senator, representing the State in which Mount Olympic is situated.

These two speakers were to be followed by Humphrey Hargreaves, candidate for Congress from the Mount Olympic District.

The Auditorium was full to overflowing. Maxine had the first place on the program. This was the first time in the life of United States Senator Wainwright, when a woman speaker had appeared with him to discuss National issues. He had not looked forward to this event, with any pleasurable degree of anticipation. In fact, he questioned the judgment of those who had charge of the Speakers' Bureau of the National Committee, — in permitting women speakers to appear simultaneously with the masculine orators of the campaign.

"So you want me to speak first? You've shown me much consideration. I shall take only twenty minutes,"

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Maxine said to Senator Wainwright, at the opening of the meeting.

When she had spoken twenty minutes, the impression which she had made upon the audience, was so profound, interesting and electrifying; and Senator Wainwright was, himself, so delighted, that he insisted, most definitely and emphatically, that Maxine should continue her speech. As soon as she was satisfied that Senator Wainwright was in earnest, she went on, — in her magnetic, eloquent style, — illuminating her discourse by brilliant wit and humor, and occasionally, satire, — in such an appealing, convincing manner, that she had not only the interest and attention of those of her own political faith, — but she was beginning to make a worth-while impression upon those, in the audience, of opposite political views. Before she concluded her speech, she had the hearty sympathy and demonstrative support of, at least, nine-tenths of her audience. Many of those “who came to scoff remained to pray,” to quote figuratively from the much adored and revered poet.

One thing was very sure, she had made many votes and she had not lost any. Some of the strongest minded of the adversaries of the political party which she represented, at least, thought over what she had been saying. They admitted the fairness, consistency, and good-sportsmanship of her political arguments, — even though they could not have been won over to the doctrines of their opponents by the greatest orator in the world. Indeed, many of them were so hard-headed and obstinate, that it would have been as practical to attempt to scale the ramparts of Jehovah and pluck from Heaven’s diadem, its brightest star, as it would have been to try to change their political convictions. An opinion, especially a political opinion, is a point where most of us stop thinking. However, Maxine had scored a magnificent

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triumph, and after the meeting broke up, it was the consensus of opinion, that her oratorical effort had completely eclipsed both the speeches of Senator Wainwright and Worthington-Hargreaves.

The next morning, she received a note from Senator Wainwright, in which he said: "I want to give myself the pleasure of telling you that your address was one of the most enthusiastic, interesting and instructive speeches which I have ever heard; and I hope that you will be able to serve in many future campaigns, in behalf of our Party."

The election returns brought in a handsome majority for Worthington-Hargreaves, who ran way ahead of his ticket. That his success was largely due to Richard Radcliffe's ability as an organizer, was every-where recognized. It was also a well-established fact that Mrs. Hargreaves' democracy, and popularity in the community, were no small factors in helping her husband to win. Hargreaves, himself, had played his part to unusually good advantage, during the campaign, because he had followed the advice of Radcliffe, Mrs. Hargreaves and Maxine Marling, — just so far as his personality would permit him to do.

By nature Hargreaves had no great warmth; in fact, he was rather colorless. At the same time, he was good-natured, agreeable to meet, and he had, in his early years, acquired a rather broad conception of public policy, — through his association with his well-read and capable father, — followed by his later intimate acquaintance with Richard Radcliffe, who had always kept abreast of the times in the study of governmental problems.

Hargreaves' greatest asset, in the political world, was his ability to listen. He was a better listener than talker. Radcliffe predicted, from the very first, that Hargreaves would make a success of his public career, because he was

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prone to accept suggestions from authoritative and reliable sources. Hargreaves was neither obstinate nor stubborn. He was quite inclined to stake his political future upon the contributed life of those who were willing to give a vital part of themselves, in order that he might succeed. He was perfectly willing to express, in his official position, the ideas and principles for which his best advisers stood. He figured that if he were to do this, that he could not go far wrong. He even believed that others might help him to such an extent that he would not miss the mark of greatness in his political achievements. He did not over-estimate himself or his capabilities; but he was not lacking in the self-confidence which would enable him to proceed in a definite, resolute manner, when he once had the backing, interest and deliberate, well-seasoned advice of his political promoters.

He intended to rely upon Richard Radcliffe as his main bulwark of guidance, in determining his conduct in public life, and in deciding his attitude on the vital questions to which he must address himself.

“I must leave for the East, — for an extended trip, to New York and Washington, tomorrow morning. If there should be a special session of Congress called, directly after the fourth of March, Hargreaves would have to take his seat then, — instead of a year from the coming December.

“There is such a tremendous tension, in connection with the vital issues to be met at this time, that one who is entering upon a term of political service, for the first time, needs to have the advantage of all the best information which he can possibly get.

“Besides, there are many pressing business matters which require my immediate attention. After these are settled, I am going to devote about two months, or perhaps

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more, to securing information for Hargreaves, which will enable him to get his bearings correctly, before he must assume the responsibilities of his new office. I am looking forward to a very strenuous and interesting experience. My introductions, through the clubs of which I am a member, and the prestige afforded me by my banking and professional connections, will make it possible for me to gain access to many of the most important people.

"I am very glad, indeed, that I have always kept up my attendance at the Foreign Trade Conventions, and the meetings of the American Bar Association, because it puts me in a position where I have the acquaintance and confidence of many men, who would not give me a listening ear if they did not already know me," Richard told Eleanor, a few days after Hargreaves' election to Congress.

"Well, why didn't you tell me something about your plans before this, so that I could have been ready to join you?" remarked Eleanor, rather peevishly.

"Because I didn't decide until today that I was to go," answered Richard, while he hoped in his heart, that Eleanor would not make up her mind, at the last moment, to accompany him.

"Anyway, you wouldn't enjoy being with me on this trip, because I shall be in such a rush and so full of imperative engagements, that I would not have any time which I could spend with you," continued Richard.

"I couldn't get ready now, anyway, — but I may make up my mind in a few days to come on to New York. If you are going to be so busy, I can go on to Washington and visit there until you are ready to come home," Eleanor assured him, while he reserved to himself his hopes that she would not follow him East.

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Richard packed his travelling bag that night, and was off on the first transcontinental train the following morning. He had purposely let Eleanor know, at the last moment, of his contemplated journey, because he understood her so well that he knew she would never undertake a long trip, without a week or two of advance preparations.

Whatever may have been Richard Radcliffe's secret deliberations and anticipations, — he was never more anxious to reach his destination than he had been during this trip across the continent. He evinced much more nervousness than was characteristic of his well-disciplined character. He only stopped in Chicago between trains, — where formerly he had been accustomed to remain for a day or two. He did not even wait for the train which he would have taken under ordinary conditions, — but instead, he bought a ticket on the Twentieth Century Limited, because it would bring him into New York a few hours ahead of the other limited trains.

When he arrived at the Grand Central Station, he instructed the porter, who carried his grip, to take him through the tunnel into the lobby of the Hotel Belmont, where he always took up his residence, whenever he was in New York. He had advised the clerk, in advance, to reserve one of the best rooms in the house, — and he soon found himself comfortably ensconced in luxurious quarters, overlooking New York Harbor and the Hudson River in the distance.

He took no time, however, to survey the scenic view, by which he was surrounded. No, indeed. He was thinking of something else, — something which, evidently, admitted of no delay. He hastened to the telephone and in clear, audible tones, said to the operator:

“Riverside 9076.”

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“Number, please?”

“I said Riverside 9076.”

After a delay of about half a minute, during which time Richard Radcliffe's composure was becoming exceedingly perturbed, he exclaimed: “This service is abominable. What's the matter, Central?”

“What number did you ask for?” she said, in a calm, sweet voice, as soft and enticing in its tones as a zephyrus, morning breeze.

“I've given you the number twice. I want Riverside 9076. Right away, too.”

At last the resistant, obstreperous instrument was conquered.

“Hello,” responded a well-modulated, cultured voice.

“Hel-lo! Well, how are you?” Richard inquired.

“Just splendid, — but I'm rather surprised. I didn't quite expect that you would be in New York so soon. Why, I've only been back a few days, myself. How is everybody in Mount Olympic?”

“Just fine! I had to come East on very urgent business, and on very short notice. I thought, perhaps, you would do me the honor to have dinner with me tonight.”

“Yes, indeed. I'll be very glad to. Fortunately, I just cancelled an engagement, a few minutes ago, to go to Long Island today. It occurred to me that it might be a little too strenuous. I've been rather resting on my oars, so to speak, since the campaign. I haven't been doing very much, except what has been absolutely necessary, since I returned home.”

“When you cancelled that engagement, it was because the voice of some good Fairy told you that I was coming to town. Well, meet me at Delmonico's at seven o'clock to-night.”

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"All right. I'll be there," answered Maxine, and then she hung up.

They met at the appointed hour. It was in one of the good old days, when Delmonico's was at its best, — just a few months before we entered the war. A waiter who had served Richard Radcliffe before, during some of his previous visits to New York, came forward and bowed, smilingly.

"Will you join me in a Clover Club Cocktail?" Richard inquired of Maxine.

"Yes, I believe I will."

Just as this skilfully concocted beverage was being served by the immaculate, white-gloved waiter, Richard said:

"I had to come to New York to attend to some pressing matters, both for Hargreaves and myself, — especially for myself.

"Ever since I met you, I have always wanted to have a talk with you, when we could be just by ourselves, — and now that I have that pleasure, I can hardly realize that I am not dreaming."

"I have become so accustomed to mingling with many people that I sometimes believe that I am at my best with a crowd of people, — at a dinner or social gathering of some sort, — so I hope that I won't disappoint you at a little, informal meeting of this kind."

"I'm sure that you couldn't disappoint me, under any circumstances. Never in my life have I met any other woman who combined, to so great a degree, the ideal with the practical; — the literary with the domestic; — and the forceful with the sympathetic, — as you do. Whenever I speak to you, or look at you, I actually wonder if you can be real."

Maxine was handsomely gowned in a royal blue, chiffon velvet gown, with an underbodice of silver cloth. She wore

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a blue velvet turban hat, adorned by graceful folds of silver cloth from the base to the edge of the crown. There was an artistic contrast between the tones of her gown and her naturally, pink cheeks, the color of which became noticeably intensified, — while she drew a long breath, — after Richard's last remark, before she replied: "I'm simply overcome at such an outburst of praise, — when I know, so well, that I do not deserve it. I'm afraid that you have formed all these exaggerated impressions of my worth and merits on a very short acquaintance. Then, too, you are such a suave, easy talker, that I know you enjoy paying pretty compliments to all the women whom you admire. I always figure that it is safe to discount the approbation of the most sincere man in the world. I usually deduct a very liberal percentage for such lavish expressions of approval, — and yet, you are the last man in the world whose sincerity I would ever, for an instant, question. I always indulge my men friends in the liberties of 'poetic license,' whenever they shower their praise upon me," she concluded, laughingly.

"No, I want you to understand that I mean every word which I have said, and more, too. In fact, my command of the English language does not enable me to express myself adequately."

"Now, you really are going beyond the bounds of the veracity, which I am sure is a fundamental part of your character, — and besides, you haven't a sufficient foundation on which to build such an idealistic opinion of me."

"Yes, — the real secret of whatever degree of success I have achieved in the world, has been due, in large measure, I believe, to my ability to read human nature understandingly and accurately. This is the one attribute of my whole make-up, in which I take great pride. I have seldom made a

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mistake, — and whatever mistakes I have made, were due to the fallacious judgment of youth and immaturity.”

“You know, it is quite true that a man may have remarkably good judgment about everything else in the universe except women; and it is equally true, that women may have a superior sense of discrimination and discernment on almost any subject, — except men. This seems to have been thus arranged by an All-Wise Providence, in order to assure the continuous propagation of the race. I think you will agree with me, that it is quite obvious that many mistakes are made in such matters.”

“Yes, — and these mistakes are responsible for nearly all of the misery and unhappiness in the world. In fact, we can trace, directly, to the evil of the misunderstanding, — and broad psychological chasm between the sexes, — the four great parasites of civilization, — famine, — pestilence, — poverty, — and war.”

“Just how do you mean? Especially in regard to war?”

“I mean that the individual is only a representation of the universe in miniature. When an individual is at war with himself, that spirit of revolution reflects upon everyone, who comes within the radius of that person’s influence. Such discontent spreads, until it becomes universal. Then, peoples of conflicting interests and purposes begin to quarrel with each other, until some great civil or economic, international conflagration bursts forth. The great, international parasite of war is traceable, in large measure, to the enforced maternity of women, who are obliged to bring children into the world, whose fathers fall far short of representing the highest ideals of the mothers, — men, who do not measure up to the proper standards, — on the physical, emotional or temperamental sides of life, — to say nothing of the intellectual or

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spiritual standards, which should characterize those fitted to perpetuate a line of descendants.”

“I think you are right, — but your theories sound much more like those of a woman, than they do like the philosophy of a man. I’m ready to believe now, that you understand women, better than I thought you did, — so, I’ll take back part of what I said.”

“Well, I’m going to prove to you that I understand you,” he replied, with emphasis.

“I don’t know about that. Life is so complex, that it is very difficult for one to understand another. You remember that I told you that I am very peculiar, — and I don’t know whether any one ever has, or ever will, understand me,” she added.

“Oh, I don’t know. I don’t think you are so hard to understand, — and I think that your understanding of others is almost uncanny. Someway, I have felt, from the first, that you understood me very well, indeed. I hope that I’m not mistaken; and I hope, too, that I’m not getting too personal or too bold,” he said, rather apologetically.

“No, you are a very good friend. I have always had excellent men friends. One can not get a proper, or well-proportioned outlook on life, without the association of men, — and men, who are capable of understanding, exactly, what a woman stands for in her ideals, never try to take the least advantage of a woman’s confidence. I have always found my men friends very dependable, — not too exacting, and, taking everything into consideration, — my relationships with men have been very satisfactory.”

“I am sure that such relationships could not be otherwise, under your restraining influence, — but, if you did not radiate a certain influence of restraint, which seasons and

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balances your spontaneous, sympathetic nature, — then, it would be an ill-fate for both yourself and the men who are so devoted, in their friendship for you.

“This reminds me,” he continued, “of a poem, which I read when I was only a high school boy. Its sentiment seized very deeply on my boyish imagination, — for I was not prone to spend much time, committing things to memory, unless my teachers required such mental exertion. Any-way, I believe I can remember it. It ran something like this:

“ ‘Ah, wasteful woman! — she who may
On her sweet self set her own price,
Knowing he can not choose but pay —
How has she cheapened Paradise!
How given for naught her priceless gift,
How spoiled the bread and spilled the wine,
Which spent with due respective thrift,
Had made brutes men, and men Divine!’ ”

“That is a very fine sentiment, — so full of truth and meaning. I have often been criticized for saying that I believe men to be even greater idealists than women; — but the fact, that as a school boy, you took the trouble, voluntarily, to commit to memory a verse like that, confirms me, once more, in my conclusion that men actually are more idealistic, at heart, than are women.”

“Whether that is true or not, it is a fine compliment for the men. It not only speaks well for them, but it expresses volumes for yourself. It indicates plainly that you have only appealed to the best and highest and noblest attributes of men’s characters. I regard you with increasing admiration and confidence, — if it is possible for me to have any

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greater confidence in you than I had the very first time that I met you.”

“Now, I wish that you would tell me a good story. You always have so many of them on hand. What is your latest acquisition?”

“I don’t really know. Oh, yes! A funny thing happened just before I left home. I had been trying to sell a piece of timber land for some time. One evening, I sat in the lobby of the Cascadia Hotel, — there, in Mount Olympic, — talking to a man, who had led me to believe that he was very much interested in this piece of property. Finally, he said: ‘No,’ and then he went on to explain that he was not even in a position to buy an option on the timber tract. Just as he left me, another man, who was sitting near by, turned to me, and said: ‘I am very much interested in timber, myself. I live in a state where there is no timber. I belong in the State of Kansas. I just heard you describe your timber land. If it is as you say it is, I will pay you a thousand dollars for a three days’ option on it. If, at the end of that time, I am dissatisfied, or, if I am not able to raise the remainder of the money, I will forfeit the thousand dollars deposit.’

“The next day, I took this Kansas man out to see the property. He seemed satisfied. We went back to the Olympic National Bank, and he paid me one thousand dollars. I then secured an abstract from the Court House, and I gave the bank instructions that when my buyer paid them fifty-nine thousand dollars more, — that he should be given a Warranty Deed of the property. At the end of the three days, he telephoned me that he wanted to meet me at the bank. I went down, at the appointed hour. He deposited the fifty-nine thousand dollars to my credit, as he had agreed to

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do. Then he surprised me, by depositing sixty-one thousand dollars to his own credit. He explained, to my greater surprise, that he had just sold this piece of timber for one hundred twenty thousand dollars. In my astonishment, I said to him:

“ ‘I have always heard a great deal about the people of Kansas; — and I have always felt rather sorry for them, — because they have to suffer so much from extreme heat, crop failure, and grasshoppers. Up to this time, the Kansans have always enlisted my sympathy, — but I shall waste no more pity upon them. After this experience, I am no longer sorry for the people of Kansas, — but I shall always, hereafter, be sorry for the grasshoppers.’ ”

Maxine laughed appreciatively, and then she remarked:

“He made money as fast as my broker sometimes makes it for me. He has made some very good turns for me since election. He tells me that it is inevitable that the United States must enter the World War. I don't like to think of making money through wholesale murder, slaughter and blood-shed on a world-wide scale;—but he tells me that when once the United States enters the war, that there will be all kinds of opportunities for large profits on all the materials necessary for conducting war. I leave my investments entirely to his judgment.

“Of course, I would prefer to lose every cent that I have, — rather than to have our country go into the war. At the same time, if it is necessary for the United States to become a party to this great international struggle for Democracy, — in order to preserve and perpetuate the principles of freedom and liberty, — then, I am willing to have our country go just as far as any other nation.”

“Yes,” responded Richard, “I think that every far-

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thinking citizen feels that way. There is another very important angle to the situation, — and that is, that we must assure America's future economic position, — looking forward to a place of supremacy for the United States in world trade.

“If we make no alliances during this war, we shall have no strong friendship from other nations, after it is over. We shall have to cast our affiliation with the Allies, — in the causes for which they stand, — or else, suffer from the aspersions and calumnious stigmas, which they will hurl against us, if we leave them to continue their fight alone.

“Regardless of the temporary confusion and human sacrifices, which must attend every war, — followed by manifold injustices to multitudes, — in the end, humanity will gain ground. Such losses and sacrifices and injustices are always essential, before any permanent benefit or progress can take root in the world.

“Most men by nature are not altruistic, — but this lack of vision among men, is compensated for by the Power of Higher Intelligence, which rules over our destinies, — great and small. This Guiding Intelligence enables masses of men to satisfy their greed and avarice, — which provide them with a motivation, — sufficiently strong to dominate their energies. The highest powers of men are thus dedicated to combative pursuits. The motive of large material gains governs them, — and they thus, unintentionally, bring about a general house-cleaning and renovation of the world.

“I always look upon war as I do upon a great storm, — a terrific blizzard. It destroys much, — but it also purifies much. The men who promote wars are not, as a rule, great altruists, — but the Great Ruler of our Destinies makes up for their short-comings, — in the final analysis, — because

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they are used as instruments, through which the race gains incalculable progress.”

“Yes, I think you are right:—you remember that once before, when we were discussing another subject,—we agreed that, according to the laws of Nature’s economy,—not a thing in the universe can ever be wasted,—and so, after all,—there can be no waste, even in war,—because in reality, there can be no Evil which remains evil,—since all Evil, in the end, brings forth Good,” concluded Maxine.

“Well, it is twenty minutes after eight,—and since we have, in our conversation left unsolved very few of the world’s most vital questions,—let us reserve, for another time, whatever serious problems remain to be solved.

“I bought tickets this afternoon for ‘Chu Chin Chow.’ The curtain rises at eight-thirty, so we shall have to make haste, to be there on time. I wasn’t able to get the tickets until about six o’clock, so I didn’t call you,—because I took it for granted that you would probably like to go.”

“Yes, indeed. I have wanted, for a long time, to see that performance,” she said, while she wrapped herself in her luxurious mole-skin coat.

That evening, after the theatre, when Richard took Maxine home,—she said to him, as they entered the lobby of the palatial apartment house, where she lived:

“I have a woman living with me who is a general factotum for all my wants. She serves as house-keeper, lady’s maid, caretaker,—cook, secretary and chaperone. I have known her ever since I was a little girl. She lived in our family for more than ten years, before my parents died. In her early days, she used to be a country school teacher,—in a little, old, red school house, just outside of Cortland, New York. She has always been perfectly devoted to me,—

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and I don't know what I should do without her. She looks after me, — even now, — as carefully as my own mother could do. She is a marvelous cook. Some night, very soon, I want you to come to have dinner with us."

"I shall look forward to accepting your invitation, — more than I can possibly look forward to anything else that can happen to me," he replied, as Maxine extended her hand to bid him a cordial goodnight, — while she thanked him, with enthusiastic appreciation, for one of the best evening entertainments which could be arranged for any discriminating New Yorker.

The next day but one, after this occurrence, Maxine telephoned Richard that she would be glad to have him come to dine with her that evening.

She lived on Riverside Drive, — in one of those palaces of architectural magnificence, — in which the apartments are arranged in individual suites of six rooms.

The living-room of Maxine's suite was in Venetian style, — with the ceiling toned in subdued shades of golden brown, and the walls decorated in brocaded dark brown velvet, with a background of gold, which harmonized with the flower-painted doors, which led to the dining-room. Seventeenth Century Italian furniture, old velvets, soft toned brocades, — a few rare steel engravings, etchings, — a hand-painted picture of ocean waves and the seashore, — two bronze statuettes, — one of Queen Elizabeth, the other of Joan of Arc, — which adorned the Parian marble mantel, above the fire-place, — three lamps, — with silver-beaded, ecru georgette, and glass shades, — the latter one painted in water-nymphs, — a mahogany library table, with writing-desk to match, and a uniquely patterned, Oriental rug constituted the furnishings. There was an atmosphere of hos-

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pitality and restfulness about the room, which was very enticing.

“When we go into the dining-room, I will introduce you to Mary Ann. I always introduce her to all of my friends, and she takes a deep, personal interest in each one of them. Her name is Mary Ann Milton. When I told her that you were coming, she said she would have one of the best turkeys on the market. Her dinners are absolute miracles. At least, that is what every one says, — so I hope that you brought along a good appetite.” With these words, Maxine greeted Richard, just before he had the honor to be ushered into the presence of Mary Ann Milton, who proved to be a middle-aged, blonde woman, with rosy cheeks, — untouched by rouge, and a figure which was entirely too plump for her height. She received Radcliffe like an old-time friend, remarking: “Maxine has been telling me, today, about some of your interesting theories of life. Now, I hope that the dinner will be good enough so that you can sit here and dine and philosophize to your heart’s content.”

“I am willing to give Mary Ann credit for being a connoisseur in the art of cookery. I call this dinner a triumphant expression of trained and discriminating judgment of that which is both rare and choice. She certainly knows corn-fed turkey, when she sees it, and she is a past master in making gravy and dressing.

“You must miss all these comforts of home when you are away on long trips,” commented Richard, soon after they were seated at the table.

“Well, you see, sometimes I take her with me, and when I make up my mind to stay in any place for a considerable length of time, — I rent an apartment, and we keep house,—

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which makes a much more satisfactory arrangement, than living in hotels all of the time.”

“I have known all along that you were very domestic. It seems like an ironical fate that a woman of your disposition should be, more or less, of a nomad, — when so many women, who have little inclination to make their homes symposiums of comfort and conviviality, — marry and keep house, after a fashion, — but whose ideals of domesticity are so stereotyped and conventional, — that there is never much real freedom or enjoyment inside the walls of the places, which they call homes.”

“Well, I would prefer to be a nomad, with the power to extract from life much of its variety and every-day pleasures, than to be a settler, — willing to accept mediocrity in home-life, — romance, and the average pursuits of most women. I don’t like mediocrity in any thing. Most people accept it, as a matter of ordinary course, because they haven’t the energy to rise above it. They haven’t the vim to live at a high rate of vibration, and so, they accept the commonplace, because they are too lazy, or too indolent, to perform the exertion necessary to bring anything better into their lives. For myself, I can not tolerate such acquiescence to trite conditions. Many women, who happen to be fortunately situated, through circumstances of birth, marriage, and so on, seem to have no greater inspiration in life than the determination to survive. To my mind, they are simply reverting to the most plebian and aboriginal sources, — from which we must have all sprung, — and we never would have sprung very far, — if most of our ancestors had possessed no more of the spirit of conquerors and the disposition to excel, than do many of our modern women, who are quite content to spend

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most of their time shopping, attending pink teas, playing poker and bridge, and spending their husbands' money."

"I agree with you. Most people never achieve an ideal state, because they are not sufficiently energetic to make the necessary effort. Their manifest destiny must be worked out by a Greater Intelligence than they, themselves, possess," replied Richard.

"And most of them are so immovable and impenetrable that the Greater Intelligence has to be mighty persistent, in order to be able to reach them. They move away from their moorings, as slowly as a glacier breaks away from a region of perpetual snow, before it descends the mountain slope."

"Yes, I remember that Emerson said that a man is just as lazy as he dares to be; and, according to your theory, this applies to women, as well as men, — but, of course, Emerson included woman in man. I have always been of the opinion, however, that woman has always taken the initiative in paving the way for the world's betterment and progress," he added.

"That is a beautiful tribute, — an expression of man's ideal of woman. I do not know whether it is wholly deserved. It is a traditional quality of chivalry handed down to us by the knights of old, whose characters were founded upon honor, the protection of women, generosity to foes, and gallantry.

"I know that women are more conservative than men, — for two reasons. The first is that they possess a highly developed, instinctive intuition for self-protection, and for the protection of their young. The second is that they have, as a class, lived in such narrow and restricted environments, that they have more fear of radical changes, than have men. Personally, I believe, that estimated by the law of averages

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men have just as fine, — if not finer, principles of honor and constituents of character, as women have,” concluded Maxine, thoughtfully.

“Well, on the whole, — don’t you believe that it is a good idea for men to believe that women are better than they are, and now, you have almost convinced me that the antithesis of this is true, — that it is a good idea for women to believe infinitely in the merits and virtues and higher qualities of men, — what about that?”

“Yes, I think it would improve matters very much, if both sexes were to cherish a better opinion of each other. It would help to produce future generations of better, stronger calibre, who would have a higher regard for both men and women. I suppose that the best and noblest ideal for us to entertain would be this, — that we should think as nobly as possible of our own sex, as well as of the opposite sex. In other words, we should not think any the less of our own sex, — merely because we think the best of the other sex. I am sure that that is the truest ideal for us all, — but the super-attraction which exists between men and women, — which is responsible for the perpetuation of the race, — keeps tempting us to like better, and to think more favorably of those of the opposite sex to ourselves, — and so, most men, if they admit the truth, say that they like women better than they do men, — just as most women declare, when they are honest, that they like men better than they do women.

“This all seems to have been included in the great psychological plan for the continuation of the world. It is a part of the Great Scheme of Things, — which makes the world go around, — with the minimum of friction, — although a perfected civilization will mean the reduction of this mini-

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mum of friction to an infinitesimal degree, until it shall eventually disappear.

“I remember a few evenings ago, when we were at Delmonico’s, that you said that the four greatest parasites of civilization could be traced to the misunderstanding which has always existed, and still exists, between men and women. I know that you mentioned famine, pestilence, poverty and war. You amplified your remarks on war,—but the conversation drifted into other channels, and you did not explain why it is that you believe that the first three parasitic evils are also attributable to practically the same cause. I shall be interested to know more of your ideas on this subject,” said Maxine.

“The nucleus of the whole matter rests upon the statement which I made, in regard to individuals, constantly at war with themselves,—who would not have this continual strife within themselves,—if they were the products of a parentage, the parties to which were truly united by the tie of unalloyed love. Such unions would result in greater peace of mind and contentment of spirit. The desires to achieve and to excel in peaceable, constructive pursuits would constitute sufficient incentives for labor,—for work which should always build up and never tear down.

“It is a fact that there is an abundance of food produced from the earth every year,—and yet, there are always those who are starving,—either due to poverty or famine. Sometimes, this starvation is caused by profiteers, who, voluntarily, permit food to spoil, rather than to lower the prices; and sometimes, it is due to a lack of energy on the part of idle and indolent peoples, who have indulged themselves so long in their ennui that they have lost the capacity for the necessarily sustained and intelligent exertion, which would

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enable them to survive, if not to live, comfortably. And, of course, sometimes there is absolute crop failure, which should be anticipated by all well-managed governments in time to secure practical relief.

“That covers briefly the famine situation. Now as to pestilence, — diseases always find their inception in an unclean, sordid environment. Impressions travel from the mind to the body, with electrical rapidity. The effect is immediate, if not directly apparent. The electric wires of the nervous system become impaired, and completely disarrange the inter-communication of their junctions and terminals. The body loses its vitality unless the life-giving substance of electricity is renewed and restored. If the mind becomes infested by indifference and apathy, — the electrical forces, which control the brain, yield to depletion, — and the mind loses its power, — until the afflicted individual, unconsciously, gives up the mastery of himself to the invading, pernicious influences of despair. Then he loses out and surrenders himself to the fate of starvation of the mind, until he becomes a victim of a famine, — so destructive in its consequences, — that it is called death. When an individual yields to this conquering foe, his situation is parallel to that of the unfortunate victims of physical starvation, — the only difference being that the latter have not retained the energy essential for healthy, physical exertion, while the former has lost his innate, God-given, mental power, which, if exercised to the proper degree, would enable him to survive.

“If children were the products of well-balanced unions, — they would be so constituted that there would always be an incentive in their lives, so that they would not yield themselves early to apathetic, devitalizing invaders of the mind. In this way, disease, and all forms of pestilence, would

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gradually be eliminated, because there would be no soil in which they could take root. Like the fishes, in the streams of deep caves, whose eyes, after awhile, disappear because of disuse, — so this evil parasite, we call disease, would exterminate itself.

“Poverty, — another of the four most evil parasites, — is largely a matter of limitation which individuals impose upon themselves. As a young man, when I started out for myself, if you will permit me, for a moment, to be personal, I made up my mind that I was not going to be poor. My father was an attorney, in a little town in Indiana. He was a Brigadier-General in the Civil War, and after it, he served seven terms, the very best part of his life, in Congress. He had a large family, so he was never able to accumulate very much. There were five of us boys and two girls, and we boys had to hustle for ourselves very early. I took care of several furnaces in town, in order to earn the money with which to pay my tuition at the University of Indiana. During the summer, I worked on a farm, which my father owned, — just outside of Bloomington. I arose at four o’clock in the morning, — milked the cows, — drew the milk to a cheese factory, — after which I began a regular day’s work in the fields, — in haying and harvesting time. I wanted to make money, — become well-to-do. I was determined some way to get the world by the tail. I have, from the world’s point of view, — been very successful. I can not understand any young man of vim and determination, — not being able to make good in these days, — and yet, I can look back upon many of my neighbors and class-mates, whose opportunities were certainly equal to my own, who have never attained even a fair degree of success.

I never permitted myself to harbor any thoughts of

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failure. Whenever I have any extreme cases of poverty brought to my attention, I always find, upon careful examination, that those who are very poor have dwelt in the thought of poverty, until they have grown to accept it as an inevitable condition. But, again, I trace their apathy of despair to a certain innate dissatisfaction with themselves, in their early childhood days, — just as soon as they began to think; — and I believe that much of this feeling of weariness and tediousness emanated from parents, who were dissatisfied with themselves, and whose union in marriage was loveless.

“So far as my references to myself are concerned, I have not held out energetically, to my own satisfaction, to the very summit of my aspirations. I, too, in a measure, have given way. That was why I said to you, one time, soon after I met you: ‘Do you think that you can hold out to the end of the game, with your same fresh outlook in the art of living?’ I was very much interested in your answer. It was so refreshing and optimistic. When I say that many times in my life I have relaxed my energetic activities, instead of going on to what I believe would have proven to be the zenith of my powers,—I want to tell you that it is because, in recent years, I have often felt the lack of the proper incentive to great achievement. But there are compensating effects upon my character, I suppose. In fact, this is the one thing which makes me sympathetic, when I see another fellow who has fallen down. Then, I am reminded by myself that, I, too, have not done the best that I could have done with my life and its opportunities. This is the ‘skeleton’ in my closet. Now, I’ve talked about myself and my theories of life, for a long time. I hope that I have not bored you. Now, do let me hear something about yourself,” concluded Richard, just as he finished one of the smoothest,

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— most delicious desserts, of which he had ever partaken, — a semi-frozen concoction, — designated by Mary Ann as “maple moussé.”

“Suppose we adjourn to the living-room, and continue our session in front of the fire,” suggested Maxine.

“All right, — but before we go, I want to give myself the pleasure of telling you that that was one of the best dinners of which I have ever partaken.”

“I am very glad that you enjoyed it, because I want you to come again. Whenever any of my guests dine with apparent relish and satisfaction, Mary Ann always insists that I shall invite them again.”

“Well, I’ll assure you that I won’t require any urging, not only on account of the feast, but because, superior to that, will be my recollection of your charms as a sympathetic and patient listener,” replied Richard.

“It hasn’t required any patience, whatever, to listen to your brilliant discourse upon subjects which have always engaged my keenest interest,” answered Maxine.

“Now, you take the floor, and reveal to me, in your inimitable style, some of your views on these alluring questions.”

“I don’t know exactly where to begin,” she responded.

“Well, first of all, tell me why it is that you have not married,” he said, insistently.

“In order to do that, I shall have to be personal, too, — if you don’t mind.”

“Mind, — I should say not. I’m anxious to, really, know something about such a lump of mystery, — as you are to me. You are so fascinating, — so unique, so original, and so very charming, with all of your individuality. Go on!” Richard continued.

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“In the first place, I suppose, to be perfectly frank, that I had too much of the spirit of an adventuress to settle down with my first suitor, back in Cortland. His name was Philip Todd. He was a Cornell graduate, — a young lawyer, who began his career in the office of my father. ‘Phil’ was the son of a well-to-do farmer, — whom I always heard called Hank Todd. Up to the time that Phil went to college, his father had always spelled the family name Tod. After Phil’s Freshman year, he came home and chided his father for spelling the name with one d, whereupon Mr. Todd told him, that being just a plain man, without any fancy notions, he preferred to be humble like God, and so, he used only one d.

“Phil was graduated at the head of his class in Cornell. While my father lived, Phil did very well as an assistant in his office. At that time, I was completing my course of study in the Miss Maxwells’ School. My father died soon after the close of my senior year. Phil continued in my father’s office, while I remained at home with my mother. I thought it best to postpone our marriage until mother should have time to bring herself back from the state of exhaustion which followed my father’s death. As I told you, she never rebounded from this grief. All the time, I was getting better acquainted with Philip. I found that his love of pleasure exceeded his aspiration to make a place for himself in professional life. He became rather dissipated; and when this became known to me, I reasoned that I was no smarter, and no more resourceful, than many other girls of my acquaintance, who had married men with the hope of reforming them;—and then failed. So I listened to the Voice within, which told me, unmistakably, that there was something, or someone in the world better for me than Philip Todd. It hurt me very

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much to make this decision. I was almost weighed down with the disappointment of breaking my engagement, when my mother succumbed. As soon as she passed on, I decided upon a University course, — and as I told you once before, I went to Cornell.

“While there I received the devoted attention of a brilliant young man, by the name of Bayard Covington, who was preparing himself for a journalistic career. I became engaged to him; was actually in love with him, and we schemed together to work out a plan so that, some day, Bayard might own his own newspaper and establish an independent school of journalism, to suit his own ideals; — through which he should espouse the cause of the common man, without teaching him to be either socialistic or revolutionary in his mental processes, or actual conduct.

“To make a long story short, Bayard went to the Adirondacks on a hunting trip, just before we were to have been married, in September following our graduation. He had just started, during the summer months, as a Washington political correspondent, — during a special session of Congress. He went with some other newspaper men from New York to the Adirondacks, just after he had spent the weekend visiting me in Loyola Winfield’s home.

“One morning Bayard and his companions were in the open, and they sighted a deer. Bayard went around the other side of some heavy brush and started to beat his way back through the thicket. He was wearing a heavy, canvas coat and cap with a long peak on it. There was no color on his clothes to distinguish him. He went forward to break down the brush, and then stopped, just as a deer does when he sights a person; and then he started to break through the brush again. A very heavy rain was falling and

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it was rather dark. When the other hunter sighted him, Covington stooped over, and as he did so, he looked exactly like a deer. Blanchard, — Covington's companion, — fired and killed Covington."

"How terrible! You had to face considerable grief and tragedy very early in your life. It is wonderful that you have been through so much, and that you have continued to keep up your animation, good-nature and optimism," remarked Richard, sympathetically.

"Yes, I was quite broken-hearted, after Bayard Covington's death, — coming as it did, just a few years after the death of my parents. It was only my natural resiliency of spirits, which finally enabled me to rebound. After awhile, I resumed my keen, normal interest in life."

"Yes, and you have added much zest and piquancy to the everyday activities of existence, and kept up your enthusiasm by your numerous interests."

"I have always believed that if we are bigger than our sorrows and losses and disappointments and temptations, — that enlarged opportunities, for both service and happiness, are sure to come to us," remarked Maxine, in her usual animated manner.

"You carry your optimism a little farther than I do. It seems to me, sometimes, that some of the biggest, strongest men and women in the world end their days without finding their greatest opportunities," commented Richard.

"Not if they prove themselves bigger than circumstances. I am just as confident, within myself, that I am going to find the biggest opportunity, which the world holds for me, — as I am that the sun will rise tomorrow morning," she said, determinedly.

"I wish that I could adopt your philosophy. If I could,

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I would go to work at once, to find the biggest opportunity, which exists for me," he said, thoughtfully.

"Well, there isn't any reason in the world why you shouldn't fill any place on earth to which you aspire. You have the mental calibre, the imagination, — the vision, and above all, the personality which will enable you to accomplish whatever you may desire. What place in the world would you like most of all to fill, — if you resolved to achieve the summit of your ambitions?"

"I would like to be able to fill, not only acceptably, — but with superior efficiency, some place in public life, — where I could distinguish myself and prove myself big enough to measure up to the highest standards ever achieved, in the office to which I was called. To sincerely render public service, to me, is the highest ambition which a man can have," concluded Richard.

"I have always wondered why you did not enter politics. When Worthington-Hargreaves was a candidate for Congress, — I used to think, often, that you were so much better fitted to meet the responsibilities of a Member of the House of Representatives. Of course, sometimes, it is a long road to travel before a Congressman can achieve much distinction. You would be remarkably well-fitted for a Diplomatic or Cabinet position, — or some Executive office, where you could put into operation your best principles and ideals in the interest of public policy," she suggested.

"You speak with such fidelity to my highest aspirations, — that your words are almost startling. And I don't believe that you are flattering me, either," he continued, his voice rising.

"No, indeed. I have always had confidence in your ability, ever since I met you. I think that you are very

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capable of attaining some high place. You managed Hargreaves' campaign so splendidly. He and I talked about it a great many times. Loyola was so appreciative of every thing which you did. In her estimation, you are just indispensable to Hargreaves' future career. I doubt very much, however, that he will ever go much farther. I have no doubt that, with your backing and advice, that he will make good in Congress;—but I don't believe that you will ever be able to make such a feature of his record that he will commend himself to the public as worthy of a much bigger office."

"Perhaps not, — although I am very loyal to him. I shall do the very best I can by him, — but it will not do for me to continue too prominently as his biggest promoter, — because I have recently been elected as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Copper Mountain Development Company, and I am already identified as one of the Directors in so many corporations and financial institutions, that I am regarded by the average voter as a capitalist, — who serves the interests of capital. Fortunately, I have been able to keep this impression rather subdued, in the minds of the public, —because I have always recognized the right of labor to unite its factors, — but I have always taken the position that a card of membership in a labor union should be a diploma representing skill and efficiency, — and that such membership cards should only be issued to those of the workmen who stand for a scale of wages in proportion to their skill and merit. To other laborers, I would only have issued cards of apprenticeship, — until such time as they proved themselves capable, and worthy of the privileges and increased wages of skilled workmen. So far, labor organizations have never actually antagonized me. In fact, they have

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been, with the exception of a few cases, rather friendly to me.

“I suppose that I would have gone in for a public career several years ago, if there had been any one to encourage me along those lines. That is where I have been weak. Since I have been comfortably well off, I have settled into the groove of the average, successful man, — just attended to my business and law practice, and Hargreaves’ affairs, — maintained a position of influence in my own community, — and let the rest of the world go.

“Mrs. Radcliffe has never been interested to have me achieve anything more than I have done. I don’t mean to speak at all disparagingly of her. In many ways, she is an excellent woman. She has always read a great deal of fiction; — but she has never seemed to translate, into her own life, the lessons which she might have learned from fiction. She has always looked upon the duties and offices of men and women, as something entirely to be distinguished and separated from each other. Apparently, she has never been ambitious for me to fill any bigger place than I am filling today. If she has ever entertained any ambitious thoughts for me, — she has never let me know anything about it. Whatever I have accomplished, — I have achieved alone, — without the stimulus which I believe should come from one’s life partner. However, I am not criticizing, as I believe that we should take our partners in marriage as we find them and not as we would have them.

“I am speaking rather freely to you, — more freely, perhaps, than I should, — but I remember that I, inadvertently, gave myself away the first time I met you, when I asked you how it was that you had been able to keep your emotional balance, while the rest of us, nearly always, made

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some vital mistake in forming alliances, which wrecked our affections on a sea of despair," concluded Richard.

"Yes, I remember. I thought, at the time, that I had caught the secret of your life; — but I did not know you well enough to encourage further discussion of such a delicate subject. And don't think, for one moment, that I have been so immune from emotional attacks. On one occasion, I, all but decided, to marry a wealthy widower from Montclair, New Jersey, no doubt you have heard of him, — Redfield Bowman. He has offices in Wall Street, and a very fine reputation among financiers. In many ways, he is rather likable; — but he has such an unrelenting, uncompromising, dominating disposition, that sometimes, he just makes me shudder. He offered me every inducement in the world, if I would marry him. The life which he could have given me was very tempting, in some ways. He had a palatial home, limousines, touring cars, a yacht, and a large fortune. To one of my social disposition and benevolent inclinations, this opportunity was not easy to reject. Possibly, if I had not been protected by economic independence, I would have married him; but in my heart, I felt no all-absorbing, consuming fire, — no divine spark of affection for Mr. Bowman. In fact, there was not even the great essential of a happy marriage, — perfect congeniality between us, and so, I refused him, as graciously as possible, — without wounding his vanity, — a mighty difficult thing for a woman to do. I believe that I made him see the situation, — that it meant no disparagement of his splendid qualities, — that it was simply a case of a lack of the proper emotional and temperamental combination between us.

"I have always reasoned that the majority of unhappy marriages occur because the parties thereto become tempo-

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rarily infatuated, and imagine, for physical, or other reasons, but mostly physical, that the attraction existing between them will be climaxed by unceasing, romantic, emotional expression, which will lead them to the very heights of marital bliss. They marry; find the electrical spark of Divine fire missing; and discover, in most cases, that there is a lack of capability to cherish, perpetually, a sustained affection,—on the part of one or both.

“I believe that marriage, most of all institutions requires for continual and permanent satisfaction, — personalities of inexhaustible merit, interest and resources, — as well as much physical, mental and spiritual charm.

“For those of high ideals, it is a rather hazardous undertaking. It requires, I believe, more character and ability to be successful in such an alliance, — than it does to make good in any vocation, or business, or profession in the world. Many of the most interesting, magnetic personalities make a failure of it. It is so natural to be continually making an analysis and inventory of the other fellow, — that one often forgets to appraise one’s self at true value.

“But just think,” she went on, “if we would only permit ourselves, for a moment, to become intimate with ourselves; — then we might reasonably inquire as to the duration of time which we believe we could be entertained by ourselves, if we had only our internal, personal resources on which to rely. Then it would be in order to ask ourselves the question, — How long could we reasonably expect another individual to depend upon us for entertainment, mental recreation, or incentive to achievement?”

“You have such high ideals of marriage and its responsibilities that I don’t wonder you have not had the courage to attempt it. I quite agree with you, however, that many

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married people become tired of each other because they have so few resources within themselves with which to entertain each other. This is especially true of women, who spend their time in narrow spheres, and whose contact with life, and many of its experiences, is so limited, only to the things of every-day occurrence, — those things which touch the lives of women, immediately, — that their mental horizon becomes rather contracted, — within the small radius of their own restricted circle.

“That is why that it is the woman of the world, — the actress, — the woman of large experience, who wins the desirable man most easily. Her success lies in her personality, plus her experience. The man of large means will often marry an actress, or an experienced woman of the world, — instead of a woman of his own social set, — because these women are the most attractive and interesting women on earth. No one can say just why, but the man who sits next to an actress, or a woman of the world, at a dinner or supper, is invariably charmed,” said Richard.

“Isn’t it because the actress knows human nature? She understands people. She must do that, or she could not hold the public,” answered Maxine.

She reserved to herself the thoughts, which, if she had expressed them, would have rounded out the truth of that which she and Richard had just said.

Maxine knew that the woman of broad associations, — the actress, knows that which most wives never seem to learn, — that men are only great babies. To confirm this, she knew that one had only to read the evidence in some of the actress-millionaire romances and divorce episodes, where it is continually a matter of record that, in most cases, a vivacious, theatrical performer has won the affections of

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another woman's husband, by addressing some bald-headed, paunchy, old man, as "Darling Boy," or "Sweetie Toodleums."

"It's getting late and I must not keep you up any longer. I have had the best visit with you that I have had with any one in many years, and you are very generous to honor me by bestowing the hospitality of your Heavenly little home upon me.

"Some evening soon, I would like to have you meet me for dinner down town, and then we will go, afterwards, to the opera," suggested Richard.

"All right. I haven't been to the opera yet this year, — and I always enjoy it."

After Richard left Maxine's apartment that evening, she reflected upon many things, which they had both said.

Maxine had admitted to herself, frankly, when she had first met Richard Radcliffe, that he was different from all the other men whom she had ever known. He had a certain dash, — a spontaneity, and a thoughtful, conscientious attitude toward life, which she had found lacking in many men. Then, too, Radcliffe was able, — a man among men, who had achieved success and distinction in success. Still, he understood the great art of small talk, — had a streak of humor in his make-up, and a keen appreciation of the little things which mean so much to women.

While Richard was on his way home, he dwelt upon thoughts of Maxine's geniality and sympathetic understanding, — an understanding of life, — which she seemed to be able to apply to every one whom she met, — and, she had seemed, from the first, to comprehend his exact situation better than anyone else whom he had ever known. Even Helen Hammond, with all of her personal interest in him,

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and his most vital affairs, — lacked that deep, intuitive insight, — which seemed to be an inordinately developed faculty, — belonging to Maxine Marling's personality.

The next morning, about eleven o'clock, when Mary Ann was giving Maxine her weekly shampoo, the latter inquired of her:

“What did you think of Mr. Radcliffe?”

“I liked him the best of any of your men friends, whom I have ever met. He seemed so natural and sincere. How do you like him yourself?” inquired Mary Ann, with her usual bluntness of speech.

“He is a very satisfactory friend. He is, however, a married man, — as I believe I told you.”

“Well, do you regret that he is married?” queried Mary Ann, persistently, while she massaged Maxine's scalp, with a vigor which indicated, unmistakably, her energetic disposition.

“I don't know that I really want to put it that way,—not quite so broadly as that,—but he is very interesting. He has a big-hearted capacity for comradeship. He does not tire me. I have become rather fed up on the society of men, who believe that women can live entirely on their flattery, — and their boastful tales of the great things which they have accomplished. I know one man who never talks about anything else, except his big, white yacht, — his house up at Lennox, — and his seven-car garage. There is another one, who talks, continually, about the corking deals which he puts over in munition stocks, steels and coppers. He seems to think that all I can possibly be interested in, — is his ability to make money. It is so seldom that I meet a man, who has, within his heart, the sincere desire to render all possible service to the world, — who wants, — with his full conscience and ability, to do his part, to make this world a better place in which to

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live. Mr. Radcliffe is that kind of a man. To my mind, — the only excuse for living is to make one's self useful, in some kind of constructive work.

“The only thing which bothers me in continuing my social relations with Mr. Radcliffe is, that if the world knew, they would consider it a big, conventional indiscretion. Although I am rather unconventional at heart, — at the same time, I have always, — to a great degree, obeyed conventions, — although they have imposed many restrictions upon me, under which I have chafed considerably.

“However, for the present, Mr. Radcliffe is quite alone in New York. I thoroughly enjoy his conversation, — and I believe, absolutely, in his sincerity; — so I have made up my mind that I will spend some of my time with him, — because he is really stimulating to me, — mentally. We seem to be mutually congenial. Our inter-change of ideas, on many interesting subjects, is certainly conducive to self-improvement, — so I see no reason why we should not entertain each other.”

“I'm sure your judgment will not lead you astray. Your father and mother both had such good judgment that you could not miss the mark of being a good judge yourself. So far, — in all the years, during which I have been with you, since your mother's death, I have always been thankful because you have always lived, — just as I imagine they would have had you live.

“I don't believe in either spooks or spirits, but sometimes, when I have feared that you might make a mistake and marry some selfish, sensual type of man, — like Redfield Bowman, — for instance, — something uncanny has always seemed to speak to me and to say: ‘I will give my angels charge over thee to watch and keep thee, — and in their hands they shall bear thee up, — lest at any time thou dash thy foot

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against a stone,' I know, in my heart, that no evil shall ever overtake you, — so I'm not going to give you any advice; — I'm just going to trust that everything will always be all right and work out for the very best for you.

“To me, you are just as much my own girl as though you belonged to me. I have always felt that you were sent into my life to help to console me for the loss of my own daughter, Lucile. You know that she was only nine years old when she died, and you were just that age when I went to live with your folks. Some way, I have always had a feeling that your father and mother would help Lucile just as much on the other side of life, — in that Unknown Mysterious Land, — as I might be able to help you here, — by looking after you and taking care of you, as though you were my own,” said Mary Ann, while she applied, vigorously, a special kind of hair tonic, which she, herself, had prepared, for the sole purpose of keeping Maxine's hair in a healthy, glossy condition.

“Yes. I have never expressed it just that way, but I have always had a feeling that you would not be taken away from me, — because I need you so very much,” said Maxine, while she patted Mary Ann's hand, affectionately.

During the next six weeks, Maxine and Richard spent much time in each other's company. While they often introduced into their conversation wit and humor, they frequently talked of the world, — only as a pair of the most devoted idealists would have it.

They wished that a greater spirit of tolerance might take possession of the minds of men; that the drudgery of the world might be reduced to a minimum, by improved inventions in labor-saving machinery; that child labor should become relegated to the past; that parents might take a greater interest in the education of their children, and do more for them, to

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help them prepare their lessons at home; that malignant diseases might be annihilated; that a conquest of poverty might be made; that famine might be no more; that every human being could be gentle in breeding and healthy in body; that love might abide in every human heart, thereby assuring the perpetuation of the race, according to the law and spirit of love, — which would mean, ultimately, the end of all wars, both civil and international.

When Richard had been away from home a little less than two months, he received a telegram from Eleanor, announcing that she was leaving for Washington, D. C., and that she would expect him there to meet her on her arrival.

The day after he received this telegram, there came another, which read as follows:

ARGUS IS VERY ILL. HE HAS HAD SEVERAL SEVERE ATTACKS OF INDIGESTION DURING THE PAST MONTH. MRS. RADCLIFFE DID NOT THINK IT NECESSARY TO LET YOU KNOW; BUT NOW THAT I AM ALONE I THINK IT RIGHT TO TELL YOU. TODAY HE HAD A SPASM. I SENT FOR A VETERINARY WHO TELLS ME ARGUS' CONDITION IS CRITICAL. WILL DO THE BEST I CAN FOR HIM. FREIDA.

Richard immediately sent telegrams to Freida, Ralph Phipps, who had charge of the Radcliffe office, during Richard's absence, and also, to Doctor Godfrey and Doctor Bradshaw. He instructed the latter to see that the best veterinary skill, obtainable should be employed. In the messages sent to his office and house, he directed that no expense should be spared to provide for Argus' care and comfort. When Radcliffe received the replies to the rush telegrams which he had sent, he was seized with much consternation of mind. He reflected on all that Argus had meant to him. This sagacious,

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canine creature had proven himself the nearest to a Soul-Mate of any companion which Richard had ever had. Argus had always understood his master. He had sympathized with Richard whenever there had been any domestic friction. Whenever Radcliffe had come home from the office, depressed or fatigued, Argus had always welcomed him, with all the warmth and spontaneity of his noble canine nature. This welcome was the better appreciated, in the absence of an affectionate greeting from Radcliffe's wife. And now, Argus was lying low, while his master was three thousand miles away. It was pitiable. If he thought that Argus would live until he could reach home, he would start at once, instead of waiting for Eleanor's arrival. He telephoned to Maxine. She was not at all lacking in sympathy when he informed her of the sad news which he had just received.

"If you were to see him before he is too far gone, you might save his life," she said.

"Anyway, I have some important business matters which should be attended to back home," explained Richard, whose masculine pride restrained him from acknowledging that it was actually his tenderness of heart and affection for Argus, which would take him across the continent, — in the event that he decided to go. He was only trying to make a plausible excuse, so that he would not appear to be losing his emotional balance, because of his anxiety concerning his canine friend.

"Come down to the Belmont and have dinner with me. Meanwhile, I will think matters over and decide what I am to do," continued Richard.

When Maxine arrived at the hotel, Richard had already purchased his ticket for home, and had his traveling-bag all packed. He related to Maxine something of the discomfort which Argus had always experienced whenever his master

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was away from home. He told her of Eleanor's attitude toward the dog, and of the numerous occurrences when Eleanor had threatened to dispose of Argus.

"If he gets well and you want to bring him back East with you for the remainder of your stay here, I will be glad to take care of him, — even though I have to smuggle him into my apartment. We could take care of him with the help of the janitor," suggested Maxine.

"I may do that very thing," responded Richard, "although it would seem like an imposition on your good nature. I'll think it over. I know that it would be pretty soft for Argus if he had you to look after him. Then I would find myself in a position where I should be envying my own much-loved dog," commented Richard, with a warm sparkle in his large, expressive eyes.

"Well, you bring him back with you. I would just love to have him. I remember that he strolled through the room where we were playing cards when we were all at your house to dinner. I recall, too, that Mrs. Radcliffe put him out just as he started to put his head against my knee. I stroked him, once or twice, and then she, protestingly, led him away," said Maxine reminiscently.

"I hope that I shall get back before anything exciting occurs in Washington. Matters are becoming very critical. I should not be surprised to see war declared by this country within the next few months. Von Bernstorff should have been sent home long ago. The President has made an attempt, in his recent note, of December 18th, to sound public opinion. You know that the German Government has recently proposed a Peace Conference, — with the idea, of course, that Germany shall receive suitable reparations, guaranties, and above all, the freedom of the seas. They have anticipated the President's peace overtures. He declares that the parties to the war are

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fighting for the same principles, — at least, on their own statements, and suggests that the belligerents are only misguided men, who should cease their antagonisms. I do not believe, however, that the Allied Governments will accept the idea of a Peace Conference at a time when the Kaiser is in a position to rattle his saber at the Conference table. Of course the Allies can not continue the war without the raw materials, munitions, manufactures, and food supplies from America. That is why our Government must always be consulted whenever any big question, concerning the Allies, is to be decided.

“I think that there will be a special session of Congress; — so I will go on home and return as soon as I can. Hargreaves is in Washington now, studying conditions, — although he will not take his seat in Congress until after the present session expires.”

Richard sent a night letter to Eleanor at the Fairchild home in Washington. He knew that this message would be delivered to her upon her arrival. That she would be highly indignant, he did not doubt. Neither did he care. After all, Richard knew his wife to be in excellent health. She did not need him nearly so much now as did Argus. Radcliffe was determined to show something of the same degree of devotion and affection toward Argus, — as the latter had always shown toward him. Before he went aboard the train he made arrangements to have several telegrams delivered to him en route from New York to the Pacific Coast. These would keep him advised, frequently, concerning Argus' condition.

The first two messages which Richard received after he left New York, — were rather discouraging. Then there came one at Chicago, after he had changed trains, — which sounded a little more cheerful. By the time that he arrived in Montana, the news of Argus began to grow worse. There was little

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hope left in Radcliffe's heart that he would be able to reach Mount Olympic in time to greet, once more, his loving dog-friend in life. Without Argus, home would not be home at all; — and he would hurry back to New York as soon as he possibly could. If Argus could only be spared, he would, at least, have the joy of spending the holidays with him at home. What a balm to the soul this would be! It would be the first time in Radcliffe's married life when he could do just as he pleased in his own home at Christmas time. The thought almost made Radcliffe, for the moment, delirious with joy. Richard found himself indulging in such fanciful and extravagant reveries of the raptures which he and Argus would experience, — in the event that his Dog-Pal should survive, — when, alas! there came into his mind, with flashing frequency, the messages of ill purport which had recently been delivered to him. No encouraging news reached him after he left Spokane. He was beginning to lose heart. He mused to himself: "Yes, no doubt, Argus has gone to the Happy Hunting Ground for all of his kind. Neither Phipps nor Freida wanted to wire me the sad news." And yet, there was a faint ray of hope! Possibly, there had been so little change in Argus' condition that they had not thought it worth while to telegraph again before Richard's arrival home.

Richard walked back and forth, nervously, through the Pullman section for more than an hour before the train pulled into Mount Olympic. It seemed to him almost like an age of the remote, geological past, since he had left New York. He was the first passenger to take his place at the head of the Pullman car Snoqualmie, in which he had ridden from Chicago.

As the train pulled in, he caught a glimpse of Ralph Phipps, who was down to the depot to meet him.

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“Well, how is he?” were the first words which fell in subdued tones upon Phipps’ ears, while Radcliffe grasped his hand warmly.

“Well, he’s a little easier now. Some way, during the last two or three hours, he has seemed to be a little better. I almost believe that he has understood that we were talking about your coming home. About an hour ago, when I mentioned your name, he wagged his tail for the first time in several days. From that moment, he has seemed to improve. I really believe that he will pick up from the moment of your arrival. Doctor Crider seems to think so, too. He is the veterinary, — and he has been mighty faithful, too. He stayed all night last night, and he has been at the house most of the time today.”

Phipps drove Radcliffe’s big, purring limousine through the streets of Mount Olympic as fast as he dared. “The cops would never touch us, anyway, if they knew that we were hurrying to get home to Argus, — because they all know him. He’s a great favorite in this town. He has always been seen with you so much that he is well-known to nearly everyone in town.”

No Oriental Potentate, no Emperor of large and extensive dominions, no Leader of a great Political Party in a Republic ever received an expression of devotion from their most subservient subjects, or humble followers, which was comparable in emotional intensity with that accorded to Richard Radcliffe by Argus, when his master entered the alcove just off the library of the Radcliffe home.

The moment before Richard had entered the house, Argus lay prostrated in the window-seat. He was moaning with pain,—with his eyes half closed and his mouth shut tightly, while he ground, back and forth, his molar teeth resolutely,

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— as much as to say: “I will not succumb to this thing, — this mortal enemy which has attacked me. I will fight with all the determination which has been the great foundation of the characters of my long line of gray-wolf ancestors. My father, Audifax Seigestor, never gave up. He died of old age, after he had reached the stage where he was in a state of coma most of the time. He just fell asleep and passed naturally away. He did not surrender himself to this evil thing called pain, — and I, his son, will not surrender either. I will fight to the finish.”

Just as Argus was summoning to his assistance the virile influence of his resolute and determined ancestors, — his great, mighty heart leaped with joy, when he heard his master’s foot-steps and voice, as Richard Radcliffe approached. Stricken with pain, so excruciating in its tendency, that he had hardly been able to stand on his feet for several days, — now, when his master arrived, such inexpressible joy had crept into Argus’ being that he did not restrain himself. He leaped to his feet; licked both of Richard’s hands, with the true spirit of his old-time adoration for his master, — looked up into Radcliffe’s eyes, with a deep expression of tenderness, and an understanding of his master’s soul, — which amounted almost to infinitude, — and then, after Richard stroked affectionately his face and head, — he sat back on his haunches for an instant, — continuing to gaze with soulful reverence into Radcliffe’s eyes, — after which, he relaxed himself once more on the big silver fox rug on which Freida had placed some soft, satin cushions.

Alas! what distress of mind would the mistress of Number Twenty-Three Arbor Court have experienced had she known of the transformation which had taken place in her home, during her absence. Argus was no longer an exile on the back porch,

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where he had lain for many days prior to Mrs. Radcliffe's departure for Washington, D. C. In fact, Eleanor had always made it a practice to keep Argus out of the house when Richard was not at home. During the first days of the poor dog's illness his bed had been only a gunny sack, and he had been sadly neglected. No sooner had his mistress left than Freida, upon her own initiative, took it upon herself to transfer Argus to the most livable part of the house, — because she well knew that this would be Mr. Radcliffe's wish, and besides, she was, naturally, kind-hearted herself, and was happy when she had the opportunity to indulge herself in the luxury of being generous, — whenever Mrs. Radcliffe was not around. Then, too, Freida had, for so many years, been a permanent member of the Radcliffe household, that she understood the dispositions and characters of both her master and mistress. Whenever she could make it possible to play any favoritism, Mr. Radcliffe was always the beneficiary. However, Freida was not without some quality of diplomatic capacity. She knew how to please Mrs. Radcliffe, — by her economy in cooking, and by her spick-and-span methods of keeping everything neat, polished, and in perfect order. She stood in the good graces of Mr. Radcliffe, because she would, sometimes, save an extra portion of some special dish of which he was particularly fond. Without his knowledge, she had even gone so far as to deprive herself, occasionally, of a part of some delectable viand, that her master might enjoy it; when Mrs. Radcliffe had scrimped her, by ordering an insufficient quantity. Richard understood so well Eleanor's system of ordering meats and groceries, that he credited Freida with very skilful management in the kitchen. He always recognized this in a substantial way at holiday time, — and now, the holidays were here. He presented Freida with a check to be deposited in her savings account, and although,

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such remembrances of previous years were entirely outside of Eleanor's small gifts to her servant, — and incidentally, were made unbeknown to Mrs. Radcliffe, they had always been of goodly proportions and had insured Freida, in addition to her own thrifty savings, an adequate nest-egg for her later years.

Now, at the beginning of 1917, Richard doubled the amount which he had presented to Freida, the year before, assuring her, with gratitude, as he did so, that the increased sum of money was in recognition of the interest which she had taken in Argus, and the care which she had given him.

“Well, you know, Mr. Radcliffe, that I was not thinking of any reward when I looked out for Argus as I did. I would have done the same thing any-where, and under any circumstances, where a poor, dumb creature was suffering, and it was within my power to give him any care or attention,” Freida explained, in her whole-hearted manner.

“Yes, I know that. You have proven yourself, for so many years now, that you don't have to give me any new evidence of either your willingness or worthiness,” Richard assured her.

Altogether, the holiday season, from the end of 1916 to the beginning of 1917, was the happiest time which Richard Radcliffe had ever had in his Arbor Court home.

As for Argus, he grew steadily better, from day to day, until his distemper, and fever, and indigestion, entirely left him. There was no disturbing element in the Radcliffe home. Richard and Argus were such true Pals, and had such a perfect understanding in all their relationships, that there was no friction. If a keen student of animal psychology could have read Argus' mind, the reveries of this sagacious creature would have run something like this:

“The way this house is run now, — it constitutes a real,

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Dog-Heaven. I suppose that it is too good to last. Something tells me that she will come back. I'm so glad that she didn't get here for Christmas or New Year's. My, such a dinner! I ate nearly a whole turkey myself, — on both of those days. And such quantities of nuts! And I dearly love them! English walnuts! Pecan meats! And peanuts! They did not make me sick, because he gave me plenty of exercise.

“I live in constant fear that she will be back, and that he will go away again. If I have to live here with her, while he is gone again, I am afraid my sickness may come over me again. She gave me nothing but old dog biscuit. My! they were so dry. They had been in the house for such a long time that there was no nourishment in them. She just starved me, and Freida didn't dare feed me. When he is at home, he always brings me something extra, so that it doesn't matter whether she feeds me little, or not at all. I wonder where he goes. I can't understand why he leaves me. I have always been so faithful to him. I wish that he would take me with him. I can't see why he doesn't. When he is here, he seems to love me as much as I do him. But, on the other hand, I fear that I love him better than he does me, because I couldn't go away and leave him. I'll just stick around him closer and tighter than ever and try to make him understand that I am begging for him to stay at home with me.

“I don't think that he likes any other dog so much as he does me, or that he has any other dog any-where in the world. I remember, one day, when I went to his office with him, that another dog, who belonged to another man, came into the office with his master to make a call. Richard patted him on the head, after he had shaken hands with the dog's master, — but as soon as my master noticed that I was a little bit perturbed, he put me at ease by caressing, fondly, my fore-

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head, and by telling me that I was the best dog in the world.

“Here he comes now. Won’t we have a fine time here by the grate? He is bringing a fresh log for the fire. My! what luxury, to be here in the house with him! But I’m just afraid every time I hear foot-steps in the distance, that she is coming home. She has no use for dogs. She can’t read my thoughts. If she could, she would know that I would protect her just because she seems to belong, in a way, to him. When the house next door was burglarized, the burglars didn’t bother this place any. That is the only time that I ever remember when she was very kind to me. The next morning, she patted me on the head and gave me two little strips of bacon, and told me that I was a good alarm when there were any prowlers around. She forgot it the next day though. She doesn’t seem to remember that I protect her all the time.

“Now I will lie very close to his feet, and enjoy myself. Perhaps he won’t leave me again, and he might take a notion to have me go with him, if he has to be gone for a long time once more.”

While Argus ruminated thus, his master, also, reflected upon the events of recent weeks. The telegram which he had sent to Eleanor, shortly before he left New York, had conveyed to her the information that urgent business matters had called him home very suddenly. She had not, exactly, questioned this, but she had expressed, in her messages to him, her displeasure that he did not hurry back East. She had not even made inquiry as to Argus’ condition. It had never occurred to her that Richard had gone home on Argus’ account. In fact, Eleanor had concluded that Argus was, probably, only slightly ill, and that he must have recovered soon after she left. Richard’s communications to her had been most indefinite, as to the length of time, which he would spend at

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home. He only assured her that he would return to New York, and would visit Washington, as soon as certain hazy matters cleared up. She chided him, continually, in her letters, for his apparent indifference to her own pleasure. She reminded him, frequently, that his "beautifully indefinite plans" kept her suspended in mid-air.

Just as Richard and Argus had settled down for a peaceable, comfortable time, the door-bell rang. Freida answered it. It was only the post-man again, who delivered another letter from Eleanor, the longest paragraph of which was devoted to an exposition, concerning her anxiety over the affairs at Number Twenty-Three Arbor Court. It has just occurred to her that Richard might indulge Argus in too many liberties about the house. She urged him to be careful to look out for every-thing in the house, and to caution Freida in regard to keeping the household expenditures down to the minimum.

Richard read the letter, in a rather careless, indifferent manner, and then tossed it into the fire. He continued to muse and to take his ease. He wondered what Maxine was doing at this particular time. So far as she was concerned, he was anxious to get back East, — but, he would, necessarily, have to spend considerable time in Washington on matters for Hargreaves, and while there, he would, of course, be expected to be a guest in the Fairchild home.

Some way, he found it difficult to strike a mental attitude, which would enable him to contemplate, without aversion, the prospect of meeting his wife again. He looked forward to it very much as he had always contemplated the mental hazard on the Mount Olympic Golf Course. This was one reason why he had remained at home for more than a fortnight after the holidays. Had Eleanor not been in Washington, he would have, undoubtedly, returned to New York as soon as Argus

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had recovered. In any event, when he decided to go back, he would see Maxine first. To that, he had definitely made up his mind. And what about Argus? Should he leave him at home, or would he manage, some way, to take him East with him? Maxine had made it plain that she would be glad to take care of Argus. It would seem like asking too much of her, — but, at the same time, he could not make up his mind to take the chance of leaving Argus at home, — not knowing at what time Eleanor would decide to come back home. He would never risk, again, Argus' life in her hands. He would think it all over and work out some plan within the next few days, because circumstances, in connection with his affairs in the East, were becoming so complicated, that he could not remain away much longer.

He wanted to have a farewell party, with some of his cronies, before he went back East. He went to the telephone, called up Doc Witherill, Pratt Dickinson, and several other old-time friends, with whom he had played bridge, ever since he had joined the Olympic Club, and he invited them to "come around to the house" that evening for "a little sociable game." Then he instructed Freida to prepare a buffet supper of sandwiches, salad and coffee, which should supplement the rare and choice vintages, which he had brought home in his automobile from the Club. The result was a house-warming in the Radcliffe home, exceeding in mirth and gaiety, all other social events which had ever taken place within those, heretofore, conservatively guarded walls.

No one entered into the unrestrained, frolicsome spirit of these festivities with greater glee than Argus. Just before the party broke up, Richard spread some newspapers over the dining-room rug, just in front of the buffet and placed thereon a whole, cold, fried chicken, which Argus devoured with such

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gastronomic zest and gusto that it was quite evident that he was in a normal condition once more.

Richard had sent Maxine for Christmas a Venetian vase from Duveen's. It was ornamented by a unique design of small, red roses in Mosaic work, edged with gold. He also had delivered to her by messenger, on the same day, a huge bouquet of American Beauty Roses. To express his Christmas Greetings, he had sent a Night Letter, as he had likewise done on New Year's Eve. Maxine had responded to all these attentions in courteous and friendly manner, both in letters and telegrams. She had worded her acknowledgments in appreciative, but dignified language. Before Richard had left New York, Maxine had expressed so much interest in Argus' recovery, that Richard had kept her closely advised by telegrams, until Argus was pronounced, by the veterinary, to be completely out of danger. Now, just as Richard was about to make his plans to return East, he received another letter, urging him to bring Argus with him when he came back to New York.

"Both Mary Ann and I are on exceedingly good terms with all of the employees, connected with this apartment house. The janitors, elevator boys, and other helpers, always go out of their way to please us, — so I am very sure that we shall be able to take the very best care of Argus. Do not hesitate to bring him with you, as I know you will not be contented without him; — and undoubtedly, it will be necessary for you to be in New York and Washington for a long time." This was the concluding paragraph of Maxine's last note to Richard, before he left Mount Olympic for New York.

On his way across the continent, Richard went back to the baggage car several times every day. Argus seemed to understand why it was that he was being transported, with such

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speed, on what seemed to be a long, never-ending journey, because he exercised great patience, not only at meal time, when he waited for his master to bring to him a plate of substantial food from the dining-car, but also, at night, when Richard bade him farewell and left him to muse, and sleep, and dream, for many hours,—the whole night through. Argus remembered a similar journey, which he had taken across the continent, once before. He had a vivid recollection of the time, when he had been shipped, all by himself, in a strange, lonely, old baggage car, in which he had ridden for about five days, until, at the end of what seemed like a lifetime, he had been taken off the train, where he was met at the station by the man who was now his highly revered and much loved master. Something seemed to tell Argus now, that he was not to be separated from the man whom he loved better than any-thing or any-body else in the world. He hoped, with all the hope of his being, that he was not being taken to some place where the discipline of his master's wife would be inflicted upon him.

Argus had won his way into the hearts of the baggage masters and trainmen, to such a degree, that he was the recipient of many special favors. Even the conductors had been back to see him; — and they had not appeared to observe, when Richard had taken Argus to visit him back in his drawing-room.

Within less than a week, Argus found himself luxuriously ensconced in an environment so snugly satisfying that his most fanciful, dog-imagination had never even pictured it. The only thing lacking was that he did not see his master nearly so often as he would have liked.

There was a long week-end, when he did not see him at all. This was during Richard's absence in Washington, where he

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had been obliged to go, for two reasons; first, because it was imperative that he should see Hargreaves, and take stock of all that was transpiring in Washington, — that is, of all matters of political and diplomatic interest, which were affecting the administration of World Policies, at that crucial and momentous time; — and in the second place, because the mere, formal conventionalities of life demanded that he must visit his wife; — although it is altogether likely that, had it not been for Radcliffe's alliance with Hargreaves, — that Richard would have postponed his visit to Washington indefinitely. His meeting with Eleanor was just one of those unavoidable events, accompanied by uninteresting and monotonous circumstances, which are imposed upon us all at times.

CHAPTER X

The Vital Question

RICHARD hurried back to New York as soon as he could. That evening he invited Maxine to dine with him. She declined, urging him, as she did so, to dine with her instead, — that he might have an opportunity to see Argus, who was, evidently, very lonesome for him.

“What is the most exciting news in Washington?” Maxine inquired, directly after they had taken their seats at the table.

“Well, you know today is the first of February. The Germans have served notice that they are to begin unrestricted, submarine warfare. It is the opinion of all of those who are on the ‘inside’ of affairs at Washington, that the United States will break off diplomatic relations with Germany, day after tomorrow. It is, also, accepted as a foregone conclusion there, that it is inevitable that the United States must get into this war.

“In the President’s recent Address to the Senate on January 22nd, he publicly advocated a ‘Peace without victory,’ a peace where there would be no victors or vanquished.

“Of course, England and France will not accept such a peace. The pronounced intentions of the German Government to cancel their submarine pledges, at this time, have created such a storm of indignation in the United States, that it is

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beyond the power of the President to control it. He can no longer retain his neutrality uncompromised.

“In the long run of things, I think it will prove very stupid, on the part of the German Government, for them to put into practice a policy of unrestricted, submarine warfare.

“The one thing which worries most thinking men in Washington is the condition of affairs in Russia. If the Russians should collapse, it will be a hard blow for the Allies,” suggested Richard, in thoughtful, deliberate mood.

“Let us hope for the best. The world is in such a state of confusion and bewilderment, and yet, I have an abiding faith that some Great Good will come of it all.”

“Yes, I know that you always say that. I am beginning to believe that this terrible European conflict is re-acting upon every individual in the world. If we enter the war, the reaction upon all of us in the United States will be terrific. I think that we should go into this war and share, justly, with the Allied nations, our responsibilities for the preservation of humanitarianism. At the same time, I know that when the world is engaged in such universal slaughter and bloodshed, that there is bound to be a tremendous effect upon each one of us.

“To speak, personally, I have been at war with myself ever since this European war began.

“Every thing which I do for the mere sake of conventionality, — just because I am expected to do it, — whether my heart is in it or not, goes against the finer instincts of my soul. I am constantly revolting whenever I find myself in a position where I must do something directly in conflict with my higher nature. For instance, I have just been in Washington, where, of course, I paid a visit to Mrs. Radcliffe and the other members of her family. With all due respect to them,

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and they are, indeed, very worthy people in most particulars, at the same time, to speak frankly, I did not enjoy myself. I was under an unnatural restraint all the while I was there. I have lived under the influences of great repression, for many years, and such factitious methods of living are tending to make me rather artificial, — a sort of sham, — so to speak, — something which I despise, above all things," concluded Richard, emphatically.

Maxine hardly knew how to answer Richard. For an instant, her wits were tested, as they had not been for a long time. The accumulated experiences of her whole life did not seem to give her the inspiration which she needed. Besides her travels, she had read Philosophy, Ethics, Fiction, History, Science and Politics. She had followed the Movies and Baseball; played the Stock Market; written for Magazines, and she had always studied men. As soon as she could collect herself, following Richard's last remark, she said:

"You are quite right. No one should live under such a strain. What you have just said bothers me. You told me, a short time before you went back West, that ever since our association began, you had not been able to find any pleasure in the society of any other woman. I was inclined to think, at the time, that this was due only to the natural exuberance of spirits, which always ensues when we contact a new personality, which interests us.

"Delightful as our friendship has proven to be, I would not want to continue to spend so much time with you, if I believed that our comradeship would result in making you permanently dissatisfied with the companionship of Mrs. Radcliffe," said Maxine, frankly.

"Don't worry about that. You have not been in any way responsible for the state of affairs which exists between me

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and my wife. In fact, meeting you has proven to be the great oasis in the vast desert of my life.

“To be perfectly frank, — well, as I have often said, my wife is a good woman. I think that she tries, in her way, to be an excellent wife. I have no disposition, or inclination, to discuss a delicate subject by indelicate references, — but, as I said a moment ago, I am going to be perfectly candid in saying what I have wanted to say for a long time. Mrs. Radcliffe and I have just, gradually, drifted apart. I don’t know exactly why, and I don’t believe that she does. We just don’t seem to have been intended for each other, in the first place. It was one of those mistakes, which I have sometimes heard you mention, where parties marry when they know too little about each other.

“I have made up my mind, that in marrying Mrs. Radcliffe, I married a woman of four personalities.

“First of all, there was the girl whom I knew, when I first met her; then, there was the girl whom I knew, after we became better acquainted, and later engaged; then, there was the woman whom I married and grew to know much better; and then, there is the woman, whom I have never known, and never will know,” remarked Richard, in perplexed mood.

“That would probably have been true, no matter whom you had married. I believe that every one always keeps a part of himself, or herself, in reserve. In fact, I am quite sure, that if a man ever arrived at the point where he believed that he knew all about a woman,—he would immediately lose interest. There must always be something left, within a woman’s character and soul, which no man has ever explored. This unknown element of her being is the feature which sustains man’s desire for conquest and exploration. The discreet woman, always, intuitively, holds back something. She does

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not do this altogether for policy's sake, but because she is restrained by her intuition," commented Maxine.

"I always marvel at your precocity in such matters; — and wonder how it is that you are so discerning and far-sighted, lacking, as you do, the experience of married life.

"You certainly have been a keen observer; — and I count it nothing short of genius that your final conclusions, based upon the results of observation instead of experience, are for the most part, correct," Richard answered, with perplexed curiosity.

"It is a fallacious theory that all true wisdom must come from the school of experience. That is altogether a rather stupid notion. We accept certain well-defined scientific and mathematical axioms, and other self-evident truths, as fundamentally correct and infallible. No one would think of disputing the statement that two and two make four. Why shouldn't we, then, accept as final certain philosophical principles which are purely the results of cause and effect?" she queried.

"Because in all matters affecting the emotions, which have deep concern with the heart and soul, we are prone to believe ourselves exceptions to the general rule, and nearly all of us possess enough ego to flatter ourselves into the belief, that our own individual methods of solving life's greatest problems will prove to be best for us, at least.

"You must have been born with an intuitive quality, almost uncanny, as well as a faculty for the deepest observation on the most intricate subjects. I have great respect, — a respect which amounts almost to reverence, for what most people would call your intuition, — but I call it, your good judgment, — because you have not permitted yourself to be drawn into the network of trivial conventionalities and piffling pastimes,

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which take up the attention of most women, — and yet, you win the confidence of your women friends. How do you manage to have both men and women repose their most sacred secrets within the bosom of your soul?" he inquired studiously.

"O, I don't know, unless it is because I always have a sincere, heart-felt interest in every one, whom I admit to my friendship. For instance, there is my friend Ethel Rygate. Ethel used to be a singer. She had a charming voice and a very pretty face. She had a style about her, too, which was so inimitable that the finest art model on Fifth Avenue could not have imitated her. She married a young, life insurance agent, who had all the energy of a Ty Cobb, and all the capacity of a Hercules, for hard work. Within ten or twelve years, he became one of the vice-presidents of one of the biggest life insurance companies in the United States. He bought a brown stone mansion for Ethel; — but he has been so ultra-prosperous, during the last few years, that, with all of his outside interests, he has grown tired of Ethel, who has never had the 'pep' or common sense to keep up with him. Ever since she has been able to keep a house full of servants, she has spent her time in frivolous pursuits, without a serious thought, for herself, or any one else. Her husband spent a small fortune on a library for their home, but the resources of it have always remained utterly untapped, so far as Ethel is concerned. Charles, that is her husband's name, likes women who are interesting, in one way or another, and Ethel has simply drifted into a rut, where she is anything but interesting.

"Only recently, I have encouraged her to try to make herself more companionable for Charles, — and she is succeeding, to some degree, by keeping in touch with the live subjects which are of interest to him. For several years now, he has made a practice of spending most of his time away from

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home, — comes home to dinner about twice a week, and all that sort of thing. Ethel has stayed at home alone evenings more than half of the time, for the last few years. Charles has done his entertaining at the various clubs, of which he is a member, — on his yacht, and so on. Nearly always, of late, he has left Ethel at home. Not long ago, I advised her to give him a little surprise, some evening, when he came home. It happened that last summer, Charles sent Ethel and her sister to Europe all by themselves, because he wanted to have them out of town. Of course, they made some friends, during their voyages to and from the other side, and I told Ethel that, if I were in her place, I would invite some of my newly-made friends to have dinner and spend the evening, some time during Charles' absence. I told her that I would be sure to include some of the most interesting, eligible men, as well as some attractive, talented women. She acted on this suggestion, and one night last week, Charles came home after midnight, only to find the house filled with strangers, — who were, evidently, his wife's friends. He was too good a sport not to enter into the spirit of the occasion, when Ethel introduced him to her guests. After they had departed, she merely said: 'I've grown rather tired of being alone so much, so I thought I would invite some of my own friends in, since we never seem to see, any more, our old mutual friends, who used to be entertained here, and who formerly entertained us.'

“A few days after this occurrence, Ethel told Charles that she had invited in some friends to dinner, and that she hoped he would be able to arrange his engagements, so as to remain at home to dine. He quickly accepted his wife's invitation. I had things all fixed up myself with Ethel, so that she would invite Henry DeFleur, an eminent lawyer, to attend the dinner. We planned that Mr. DeFleur should sit at Ethel's

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right. It happens that I know him very well, and so, before the party, I said to him, rather casually, — ‘Ethel needs a little help right now. Just make it a point, will you, to tell Charles, after the dinner is over, that you never realized before, what a very attractive and interesting woman Mrs. Rygate is?’ Mr. DeFleur was very quick to understand just what I meant. He did exactly what I requested him to do; — and it was only a day or two before Mr. Rygate invited his own wife to attend a party on board his yacht, where he had arranged a sumptuous supper and dance, in her honor.”

“So, you made your scheme work all right. That was very good, indeed. Mrs. Rygate must feel quite indebted to you,” suggested Richard, while he meditated over the possible effect which such a course of action would have had upon himself.

“I received a letter today,” Maxine went on, “from Stephen Lauriston, out in San Francisco. He divorced his wife, several years ago, after the San Francisco earthquake, when his fortunes were ruined. He always claims that he didn’t get any support or encouragement from Mrs. Lauriston, after this great disaster. He seems to think that she didn’t stand by him, as she should have done. He was obliged to work every night at his little, old, improvised office, in order to retrieve his fallen fortunes. Instead of sympathizing with him, and trying to help him, Mrs. Lauriston started to run around evenings with a new crowd. They grew apart, of course, and finally, the inevitable separation came. Mr. Lauriston is a very wealthy man once more, but he could never feel the same toward Mrs. Lauriston again. Of course, I don’t know her side of the story, but it seems to me, that she made a mistake, by neglecting him, when he was called upon to meet such a crucial test.”

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“Yes, I know the Lauristons myself; — but I never knew before, just exactly what it was that separated them,” replied Richard, reminiscently.

Just then, the telephone rang. When Maxine arose to answer it, she said to Richard: “I’ll meet you in the drawing-room right away.” When she was through talking, she found him in front of the fire-place, caressing Argus affectionately.

“It was Olive McPherson calling me. She is one of my youngest, married friends. Her husband is one of the assistant cashiers in a down town bank. His salary isn’t large, and he finds it rather difficult to give Olive all the money which she wants to spend. She has always had rather remarkable talent as a bridge player, and for several months now, she has made enough money gambling at bridge to enable her to buy a good many extra clothes. Within the past few days, her luck has turned against her, and she just called me to tell me that she wants to sell, at least, a half dozen of her new expensive hats, in order to pay up her bridge debts. She has one hat, particularly, which I have always liked, — a silver gray toque, ornamented with tortoise shell pins. I told her that I would come over in the morning and try to make a bargain with her; — but she said that she was going down town and would stop here on her way. I’m going to have a heart-to-heart talk with her, because I don’t like the idea of her taking so many chances, which I fear, some time, may place her in a position which will embarrass her husband, — and he’s such an honest, whole-souled, likable chap, too.

“Last summer, he bought a new car, — a Chummy, four-passenger machine, and they invited me to drive with them to Babylon, Long Island. Billy, that’s Mr. McPherson, was just learning to drive, and Olive tormented him all the way out there, by telling him when he should blow the horn, when

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he should give the other fellow the right of way, and so on. He stood it good-naturedly for a while, but, at last, he insisted on either driving himself or letting Olive drive and said rather emphatically: 'We won't both drive the car. One or the other of us will drive it! So either keep still, or leave it to me!' Olive kept still, and I have an idea that if he ever finds out the extent of her bridge operations, that he may put his foot down again;—but, of course, no one will tell him unless she gets so terribly involved in debt that there is nothing else to do."

"Your story of the McPhersons reminds me of the time, many years ago, when I learned to drive a car myself. Mrs. Radcliffe would never learn to drive;—always said that she didn't want to know how,—but, at the same time, she wanted to teach me how to drive, and I had to take a stand similar to that which your friend Mr. McPherson took,—in order to give myself any peace of mind, and to insure safety when we were motoring.

"I don't know of anything which will destroy happiness, and make for general havoc in matrimony, so soon, as nagging,—and strange to say, many women, who are otherwise genteel, seem to form, unconsciously, the habit of persistently fault-finding and scolding. Such a habit is absolutely fatal, and I have never known a woman who persisted in this practice, who did not, eventually, lose out entirely. Her husband may not divorce her. He may continue to give her a certain kind of attention, but he will never give her either devotion or affection.

"As I told you in our conversation, during the fore part of the evening, I have no desire to speak with any degree of indelicacy, concerning my domestic affairs,—but at the same time, my heart and soul have grown tired and weary of a

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continual, never ceasing, unremitting flow of unsought advice, dictatorial demands, constant criticism, and lack of sympathetic understanding," said Richard, in rather vigorous tones.

"Well, it's unfortunate, — it's most unfortunate. I am very sorry, indeed. There is so much about Mrs. Radcliffe which is refined and artistic, that it is exceedingly lamentable to know that she has that kind of a disposition. Undoubtedly, though, she has indulged herself in such hyperbolical censure, for so many years, that by this time, she can't help it.

"You certainly deserve some compensating influence in your life, to help to make up, for all that you have been deprived of through your domestic harassments. If you were a different type of man, I would not speak to you in this manner, — but, knowing you as I do, — understanding as I do, your extremely conscientious attitude in all of your relationships, — I know that you can not be to blame.

"I think that your greatest compensation, for all that you have lost, will come through losing yourself in public service. Because with all that you have suffered, you will be able to enter with more vigor, nobler purpose, and more consecrated energy, into whatever you undertake. Perhaps if you had had a happier, more contented home life, you would have been more selfish, and would not have had the same deep sympathy with the struggling world, which you now feel, and, which you are so splendidly able to express.

"You know, as we have always said, there can be no loss in Nature's Plan," she concluded, sympathetically.

"Yes, I know. But, after all, there is nothing which can make up to any one for the loss which ensues from a mis-spent, married life. That is impossible. And I can't bring myself to believe either, that a happy, married life would foster selfishness. On the contrary, I think that it would keep one

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continually inspired and encouraged to express the very best and highest principles; the noblest purposes and ideals, — in actual practice. This was always my hope, before I became a married man. And I was doomed to disappointment,” said Richard, dejectedly.

“Why do you say doomed? No one is ever doomed. You are far too sensible a man to accept any situation as irrevocable,” said Maxine thoughtfully.

“That’s just the point. I don’t propose to accept it as irrevocable. I’m tired of playing the part of a hypocrite any longer, — of being the husband of one woman when I’m in love with another. As a matter of fact, I haven’t kissed Mrs. Radcliffe on the lips for nearly ten years. The last time that I remember of kissing her, when I really meant it, — she seemed to assume an affected responsiveness, and from that moment, I became utterly indifferent.

“Maxine, if you care for me, and you have given me some reason to believe that you do, by your willingness to spend so much time with me, — why not let me make a clean breast of this whole affair? Then we can arrange matters, so that we can have each other, live our own lives in the open, and face unashamed the critical world, — proving to every one, by the example of our sincerity and devotion to each other, that the way of love, — the mightiest, conquering force in the universe, is always the right way.”

At this instant, Richard made an effort to press Maxine’s lips close to his, but she restrained him, saying:

“Not yet; not now, Richard. I must have more time in which to deliberate; more time to get my bearings. This is a perilous situation for all of us, involving the gravest consequences. We must do nothing hastily; nothing which we

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shall ever regret; nothing which shall ever cause us to reflect that we have thought only of ourselves.”

They talked on, far into the night. Maxine had read, from her earliest college days, studiously and searchingly, on every subject which had to do with romance, friendship and love. She had perused nearly all classical, standard literature, relating to such matters. She had followed everything, from the great poets and fiction writers to Schopenhauer, — Marie Corelli, — Havelock Ellis, and Ellen Key. And yet, all her experience, reading and observation, had not equipped her to make this great decision in her life. She knew not what to do. Here was Richard Radcliffe, who interested her; whose every thought and aspiration were in accord with her own genuine nature, and idealism; who cared for the same things in the same way as she, herself, did; and who, above all, met the requirements of her soul. And still, there was the proverbial fly in the ointment; the eternal triangle, which must be made a right angle, before she could be legitimately entitled to Richard Radcliffe's name, protection and love.

All of Maxine's conservative traditions warned her against such an alliance. Could she build her own happiness on the foundation of the unhappiness of another? And surely, if she were to take the step which Richard had urged her to take, it would mean unhappiness for Eleanor Radcliffe.

Richard made plain to Maxine, that for many years, he and his wife had been bound to each other only by such ties as would characterize the most Platonic friendship, — that there had been no strong bond of love between them, — since the birth and death of the only child which they had ever had. Richard made it clear that, while his married life had been the gravest disappointment in his existence, that he had never thought of actually divorcing Eleanor until he had reached

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the final conclusion that he could never think his highest thoughts, and give his best service to the world, without the constant companionship of Maxine.

Maxine admitted that whenever she was in Richard's company, she always felt that her soul was properly attuned to the infinite:— that they were united by the ties of comradeship, ideals, and a true desire to see and make the whole world happy.

However, Maxine could not bring herself to the point of acquiescence to Richard's wishes. She could not consent to sanction his proposition to lay the matter in its true light before his wife, — trusting to Eleanor's indomitable pride to give her husband his freedom, when once she understood that he wanted it. Richard, himself, believed that if the situation were to be revealed to Eleanor, she would immediately, on her own initiative, suggest that one or the other should obtain a divorce. He was perfectly willing to make a liberal settlement of property in Mrs. Radcliffe's favor. His abundance of substantial, worldly goods would make it possible for him to do this, in such manner as would be fittingly in keeping with his innate, old-time, chivalrous spirit of generosity.

Maxine's powers of resistance to Richard's pleadings and entreaties were challenged by the fact that she knew, in her own heart, that she loved him with a depth of sincerity and affection, which she had never cherished for any other. The companionable relationship, between Maxine and Richard, had gone on, until there existed a situation between them which amounted, practically, to mutual indispensability.

“It seems so foolish, — so utterly stupid, that three sane people should go on living in such an unnatural manner, — forced by restraint and convention to do every day the things which they do not want to do. That is the way you and

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Eleanor and I are all living. I feel sure that Eleanor really enjoys herself much more when she is in Washington, with her own people, than she does when she and I are together,—except, of course, she always seems to get a certain amount of satisfaction from tormenting me. While, at times, I do assert myself, yet, at other times, I exercise so much self-control that my life is one of repression, rather than expression. That is always bad.

“I don’t like to pose as a martyr of matrimonial crucifixion. I have never discussed this subject with any one else, and I do not intend to make it a subject of future conversation between us. It would be very selfish and unbecoming of me to do so.

“I would merely like to dismiss the matter from my life,—and, so far as possible, from my thoughts. After all, I prefer to attribute the unhappiness of my married life to the fact that Mrs. Radcliffe and I were temperamentally mismatched.

“We were both rather young,—she twenty-two and,—well,—I was five years older, and really should have weighed matters more carefully. Upon reflection, though, I don’t believe that any man under thirty can be sure of himself in a love affair,—and perhaps, at that, I ought to say thirty-five. The happiest, married men whom I know, are those who were confirmed bachelors, well beyond thirty, before they married.

“I hope now, that after all these years, which it has taken to find the one woman in the world to whom I can give my whole heart, with the full consciousness that my devotion and love will be appreciated and reciprocated, that I am not going to meet the fate of a double misfortune, by being obliged to remain the husband of one woman, because the only other woman in my life refuses to become a vital part of it, owing

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to the fact that she is restrained by the formal customs which govern conventional society, — by the fear that some Madame Grundy will say that Maxine Marling came between Richard Radcliffe and his wife.

“Maxine, I believe that you are bigger than that, — that you will not take the chance of missing what would, undoubtedly, prove to be the greatest happiness in the lives of both of us, because of what a few ‘catty’ women will say.”

“No, that isn’t the point so much as that I hesitate to do anything, which will make another woman wretched and miserable. We both appreciate that Mrs. Radcliffe has many fine elements in her character. She probably cares for you more than you know. There is always a psychological side to these matters, which two of the parties to the triangle can never understand, — so we must admit to ourselves that we can not fully comprehend Mrs. Radcliffe’s exact situation, or what may be going on in her mind. In order to do her full justice, — and I am sure that neither of us wants to be any thing less than just, we must make allowances for the possible state of her feelings.

“I can not make a decision now. There is a Voice within me which restrains me. I have a deep conviction, as I have always told you, that the right way for us to decide, both trivial and great questions, is always striving to enter our consciousness, if we will resign ourselves passively to the Supreme influence of a great Over-ruling Divine Mind. We shall have to wait and see what this Highest Intelligence tells us to do,” concluded Maxine, very earnestly.

“Well, I suppose I must be resigned, — I will be resigned, to whatever you think best,” Richard answered, complacently.

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Then he continued: "I will let you be the judge of this. A woman surely has the right to dominion over her own heart and mind and soul. She must at all times be the judge of herself; her actions and her general deportment. It is very difficult to help to make decisions for another. Today, for instance, I was put to a very severe test.

"A friend of many years standing, who was a college classmate of mine, made a large fortune in New York in corporation law practice. He left a great estate at his death to two sons, Charles and Lionel Rutherford. Recently, they have become involved in the most complicated litigation over the division of their Father's estate. Matters have come to an almost hopeless pass.

"The brothers came to me, today, both requesting that I should become the arbiter of their affairs. Because of my love for their Father, I consented. Charles is seven years older than Lionel, and has been associated with his Father for many years in his Father's business; while Lionel has been at school. Therefore, I reasoned that Charles would necessarily, have a much more practical knowledge of the affairs of his Father's estate than would Lionel. Therefore, I rendered this decision: that Charles shall divide the estate into two portions; then Lionel may choose within sixty days which portion shall be his; and Charles, of course, shall have the remaining portion. What do you think of this decision? Was it fair?" queried Richard.

"You showed the judgment of a Solomon. You ought to be in a position of either great executive or judicial responsibility. That is the kind of judgment which we both need to pray for, before we decide this great question, which affects us both so vitally," answered Maxine earnestly.

CHAPTER XI

The Parting

“**W**HAT have you been doing since I saw you?” queried Richard, rather anxiously, just after his arrival at Maxine’s apartment, following an absence of more than a month, during which time he had been obliged to make another trip to the Pacific Coast.

He returned to New York on the third day of November, 1917, — just one week after the formal announcement that the first shots had been fired by the American soldiers in France, — and on the very day that the news of the first American casualties, twenty in number, reached the United States. This was just after the Germans had abandoned their position at Chemin des Dames.

America was just beginning to realize that the United States was, actually, in the war, — that it was not to be a mere paper war, — but a bitter, bloody conflict of national antagonisms, — to be fought with all the ardor and combative skill, of which every nation concerned was capable. Naturally, the first loss of life touched, with electrical influence, the heart of every true-blooded American. Every one seemed to realize that whenever an American was sacrificed, that the country had lost a vital part of itself, — in giving one of its sons to strengthen the cause of a tragic-stricken humanity.

“I haven’t been doing anything, except what I wrote you about,—speaking in the Liberty Loan drives, and helping to

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organize committees which are engaged in all kinds of war work.

“I have learned a great many things. First of all, I went one evening to speak to an audience of telephone operators,—to stimulate the interest of these girls, so that they would, from their small salaries, be encouraged to save enough money to buy, at least, one Liberty Bond for each girl. I found that these girls average, in their daily routine, to complete three and one-half calls per minute, or about, two hundred and twenty-five calls per hour, which is considered an example of real ‘speed,’ but often does not represent the ‘peak load,’ which exceeds this number. They average to work eight and one-half hours daily, but with overtime, Sunday work, ‘working through,’ loss of relief, and ‘excess loading,’ these hours are often exceeded.

“I went, also, to speak to Needle Trades Girls, where I found many young women tending sewing machines, which carried twelve needles each, making four thousand stitches a minute, or two million four hundred thousand stitches in ten hours, often working in a bright light, and with unshaded eyes, amidst a deafening roar.

“I have been in a canning factory, where every girl averaged to inspect two cans of peas per second, or seventy-two thousand cans per day. Other girls placed the caps on the cans at the rate of sixty to eighty per minute.

“I spoke, too, in some of the shoe factories, where men are employed. I saw some of the workmen revolve the shoes in such a manner as to trim off the crimped surplus leather from the ‘upper.’ They averaged five thousand two hundred shoes a day. In the eyeletting department of these same shoe factories, expert workers finished two thousand pairs of women’s shoes in one day. Each of these shoes has as many

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as twelve holes, irregularly spaced, making forty-eight thousand eyelets per day," said Maxine thoughtfully.

"It's pretty tough, isn't it, asking these manual laborers to buy Liberty Bonds, when they work with every ounce of their strength that they may earn enough to barely live upon? And yet, of course, if the war continues, these workers will nearly all have some near relative who is serving in the war,—whom they will be helping to sustain, by their purchase of Liberty Bonds.

"Personally, I feel that the burden of this great fight should be put upon the war profiteers. Since I have been spending so much time in Washington, I, too, have learned a good many things. The flour milling merchants have been enriched by profits, which are without precedent. Some of the jobbers and commission men have made over sixty per cent profit.

"Government fixation of prices of commodities will insure and stimulate production. While this will prevent the market from running away; at the same time, the stronger factors, in every industry, will be further strengthened in their position, which will result in giving a wide range of profits. Government determination of a maximum profit will not be altogether complied with. Wherever this maximum price is exceeded, the profits will be very great.

"The farmer receives for four and one-half bushels of wheat, constituting a barrel of flour, eight dollars and thirty-seven cents. For the same barrel of flour, the miller receives twelve dollars and seventy cents; the baker fifty-eight dollars and seventy cents; and the hotelkeeper, in New York and Washington, five hundred and eighty-seven dollars.

"A pound of cotton, which brings the farmer twenty-

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seven cents, will retail, in some instances, as high as three dollars and a half, or four dollars a pound.

“There is the same wild profiteering with steel and coal. Copper, petroleum, gasoline, leather goods, and all canned products, are veritable gold mines for the profiteers. Wherever the government fixes a definite margin of profit above costs, there is a considerable incentive to a fictitious enhancement of costs, through account juggling. This adds to the volume of unusual profits. Increase of cost showing on the producers’ books, can be accomplished in various ways. The item of depreciation can be padded. Officers’ salaries can be increased. Interest on investment can be included in cost. New construction can be recorded as repairs. Fictitious valuations on raw material can be added, and inventories can be manipulated.

“Commercial bribery has increased the price of supplies to the consumer. Many concerns have withheld portions of their contract deliveries, and sold spot on the market at the higher price.

“One man gave me to understand, indirectly, but nevertheless, pointedly,—because he did not dare to make such an audacious proposition outright, that he would give me a commission amounting to more than three million dollars, if I would secure for him, a contract to furnish all the gasoline to be used by the United States government in the conduct of the war. He knew that I was in a position to secure this contract for him, and to act as intermediary between him and the government, to have the price of gasoline fixed at an exorbitant figure. I assured him, in no uncertain terms, that I would never make any money by such an insidious practice, and I gave him my opinion of men who were making their fortunes by such dishonest methods. Such reprehensible

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practices are a disgrace to the country, but many of the Dollar-A-Year Patriots are resorting to just such contemptible measures. When I agreed to give my services to my country for a dollar-a-year, it was because I had a real desire to render service, and not because I intended to fill my own pockets," Richard declared with whole-hearted emphasis.

"I'm sure of that. My confidence in you is at all times justified. You never fail to measure up to my standards of manhood and humanitarianism.

"Many women's organizations are contemplating sending representatives to France. Only yesterday, I received a letter from our mutual friend, Senator Wainwright, urging me to make preparations to go to France. He requested that I speak to the troops on such subjects as would help to sustain their courage and morale. He wrote me on his own initiative,—said that he thought I could do so much good, and that if I would only make up my mind to go, that he would see to it that I should be given letters of introduction to General Pershing,—as well as all of our Ambassadors in the Allied countries.

"I have just been reading an editorial which appeals not only to the men of the land, but to every woman, as well, to come to the country's aid. It says: 'No one who is free to serve, and does not serve, can escape the epithet of slacker. To save the world from present peril will mean incalculable benefits to every man, woman and child, for all future generations.'

"What do you think about my idea of going to war? I haven't replied to Senator Wainwright's letter yet."

"The gruesome slaughter, blood-shed and carnage of war make it too cruel and awful for refined women to think of contacting it,—beyond the point of necessity in the hos-

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pitals, where, of course, they must serve as nurses," answered Richard, in reflective mood. Then he continued: "I think you can find enough to do here at home."

Maxine remonstrated by saying:

"There are many ways by which earnest, capable women can render services in this war, by providing proper forms of recreation and amusement for our soldiers, in such a way as will help to keep up their spirits. It is woman's business to guide, redeem and heal in this great conflict; just as it is man's business to crush and annihilate wrong by military force. It is woman's function to touch with a soothing balm and guide with her true, feminine wisdom,—not for her own self-advancement, but for self-renunciation,—just as it is man's function to provide the action,—progressive and defensive;—the energy, adventure and invention necessary for carrying on war."

"But what do you think I am going to do,—with my 'inspiration' gone to France? You have given me just the mental stimulus, which I have needed in the service which I have performed for the country, since war was declared.

"I suppose that you realize that it is almost a year now since we began to see each other frequently,—and your confidence has proven to be such a powerful incentive to me that I have kept myself up to a standard, which I have never even approximated before. Although I have always prided myself on my patriotism, which was instilled into my mind, as a child, at the same time, I would never have been able to put the spirit and energy into my work, which I have done in the last seven months of my war activities, had it not been for your stimulation, encouragement and appreciation.

"Again I ask you, if you go away, what am I to do?"

"I know that with your bigness of heart, that if I decide

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to go, you will understand that my decision indicates in no way a disparagement, or lack of appreciation, of our comradeship and friendship. Nothing can take the place of that, so far as our personal happiness is concerned. But I believe that you will agree with me, that even though we need each other,—at the same time, there is no excuse for us to think only of ourselves, when the heart of the whole world is bleeding and crying for help.

“We must subvert all egotism; all selfishness, in times like these. We must consider only the thought of securing the greatest good for the greatest number. That is always the highest altruism. To be magnanimous is the truest wisdom. It is difficult to say what would have become of this old world, if such men as Socrates, Pericles, Miltiades, Caesar, Cromwell, Washington and Lincoln had thought only of themselves,” said Maxine, thoughtfully.

“Or Joan of Arc,” ejaculated Richard, “for she did more than all the men of her time, to promote the highest interests of humanity.”

“Yes, indeed, and you are very gallant to mention her,” echoed Maxine. “And the women must serve humanity in this crisis, by following her example, insofar as they are capable.”

To which Richard replied: “I suppose so. It is all right to love humanity, but I was born a specialist. For the third time I’ll ask you, what am I going to do without you?”

“If, as you say, I am an inspiration to you now, I ought to constitute a double inspiration in your life, if I go ahead and accomplish something, too. I think that at first, I will do some preliminary work in the camps of this country,—to try myself out,—to see if I can make myself a factor in helping to send the ‘boys’ away in good spirits,—but later,

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—as soon as I feel competent, I want to go to France,—and I know that your own heart will be with mine, in our devotion to our country.’’

From this time until February, 1918, Maxine gave most of her time to addressing the soldiers in the military camps of the Middle States. Wherever she went, she received an ovation. As Colonel Sedgwick expressed it, one time, when Richard went out to Camp Upton, to escort Maxine back to New York: “She certainly does ‘put it over.’ She’s a riotous success. She’ll be a regular dynamo in France. Let’s see, she’s sailing next week, isn’t she?”

“That’s what she says. It’s wonderful how she holds their interest,” commented Richard.

“I’ll say it is. Most of the women, who have been out here to speak, have not made a particularly strong impression. They do much better in canteen work, or by entertaining the boys by singing, or playing some musical instrument. But, somehow, Miss Marling is different. She is in a class by herself,—a genius, in stirring up all the elements of hope, valor, determination and courage,—which men possess. I’m for her, strong, and I hope that I’m not going to be detained here in the States much longer, so that I won’t miss the opportunity of observing the early influences of her work Over-Seas. Glad to have met you,” remarked the Colonel, while he shook hands with Richard, before responding to a call to perform some minor, military duty, in another part of the camp.

“Colonel Sedgwick seems to be mightily interested in you,—had a lot of wonderfully nice things to say about you,—just gave me an ear full,—appears to me that he’s awfully keen about you! Guess I’ll have to look into the matter,” said Richard, jokingly, while he and Maxine were

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leaving Camp Upton, in Radcliffe's high-powered coupe, driven by himself.

"O, no. He's just a good fellow, and we get along fine! His support has been a great help to me out here, because he has entered into the spirit of my work, very enthusiastically," explained Maxine. Then she dismissed the subject, and they talked of other things, during their journey back to the city.

It was understood that Mary Ann should remain in Maxine's apartment, in full charge of Argus, until Maxine should return from France. Richard would continue to maintain his hotel and office headquarters, in both Washington and New York, as he had been doing for some time. Occasionally, he had spent a week-end in the Fairchild home in Washington. Eleanor had made a trip, during the summer of 1917, to their Mount Olympic home,—when the weather in Washington, D. C., had become unbearably hot. She had been accompanied by one of her sisters, who had remained with her, for nearly two months. Richard had remained in the East until some time after Eleanor's return from the West. He had spent very little time with his wife, for the past fifteen months. He had put her off, from time to time, with the explanation that his work was so exacting and arduous, that he found it impossible to relax his strenuousness, or to give himself over to the family pastimes of the Fairchilds.

On the night before Maxine's departure for France, Richard dined with her at her Riverside Drive apartment. It seemed to him, that she had never before been so bewitchingly beautiful. She was handsomely gowned in a white costume of heavy georgette crepe, trimmed with narrow bands of soft, white fur. Mary Ann had dressed her hair in an

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unusually becoming manner, so that its natural waves receded gracefully from her high, noble forehead.

There was a deep tenderness in Richard's voice, as he said:

"I feel that I am losing every thing which makes life worth living,—the companionship and sweet guidance of the woman of my ideals; but even though I am to lose you now,—only temporarily, I hope, in our country's service, I am filled with gratitude to have been blessed with the radiant sunshine of your good humor and great goodness.

"You have meant more in my life than anyone else, because you have been so quick to awaken in my nature, a renewed call for the best,—a call which has been somewhat dormant, for some time.

"My appreciation of the highest ideals of literature; of the finest models in art; of the greatest pieces of music, has been enhanced a thousand fold, by my association with you; and, with it all, you have been a human being, with a big streak of sympathy and good fellowship in your soul.

"Most women of your studious inclinations and scholarly attainments, would drive a man crazy. They are, as a rule, about as sympathetic as a Greenland iceberg; and they respond to the social needs and requirements of the average busy man, about as much as a mountain glacier yields to the influence of the sun's rays in January.

"I have often wondered why the average academic woman does not seem to think it more generally worth while, to acquire for herself the charm of sympathy."

"Largely because of her lack of social experience and the restricted environment, in which woman has lived," answered Maxine.

Then she continued discerningly:

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“Of course, woman is always afraid of being misunderstood, if she gives her sympathy too spontaneously, or too readily. She reasons that her power of reserve adds to the element of mystery, in her make-up, and entices man into a more persistent pursuit for her favor.”

“Very well said,” commented Richard, “but I think many women would get farther along, on the Road to Happiness, if they spent more time on the Realities of Life, instead of its superficialities.”

“For instance?” queried Maxine.

“Well, if women would, in the main, make an effort to win the complete, human confidences of men, so that men would not only dare, but would really want to, reveal more of their characters, in their true light, to their sisters, sweethearts and wives, the result would make for a wholesome frankness; a greater sincerity, and men, I think, really want to be sincere and candid, in their relationships with women, if they could only know it to be safe,” concluded Richard.

“The time will come when it will be easier, for both men and women, to be perfectly frank with each other. We must take into account the extreme, psychological differences in the traditions of men and women, from the dawn of creation to the present time. All men, by traditional inheritance, are, in varying degrees, innately polygamous; whereas, woman, for her own protection, and the welfare of her children, is naturally monogamous.

“She wants the intense, devoted, concentrated love of one man. She will not, as yet, take into consideration, or make any allowances for the survival of man’s polygamous instincts. If she were to do this, however, it would not be dangerous to her future safety; it would mean no compromise of modern standards. It would simply mean, that she was

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honest enough to admit, that no woman has such a monopoly, or aggregation of charms, that her own personal allurements can make her sweetheart, friend, or husband, completely immune, to the attractions of other women.

“If wives recognized this fact, and reasoned, accordingly, they would appreciate, in unity with their husbands, the attractive feminine attributes of other women, and profit by them,—thereby reducing, to a minimum, the tendency of many men to over-estimate the charms of many women, not their wives; and their desires to carry on clandestine, love affairs with them.”

“I agree,” replied Richard, “but is it not, also, true, that no man can claim for himself such a combination of desirable traits, and exceptional qualities, that his wife, or friend, or sweetheart, can attribute to herself entire immunity, from the enticements of other men?”

“No, that is not true;—especially, when the man in the case has the combination of poise, breeding, good-looks, brains and character, of yourself,” suggested Maxine, playfully.

“Very prettily said. Why do you always think the right thing,—say the right thing, and do the right thing?” he asked.

“Because you are so good-natured and generous, that it would be impossible for me to do otherwise. Because you have, to a greater degree, than any one else in the world, that keen appreciation, and refinement of character, which makes it possible for me, always, to be at my best, whenever I am with you.

“You remember Van Dyke says:

“ ‘We measure success by accumulation;
The measure is false;

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The true measure is appreciation;
He has most, who gives most and loves most.' "

Richard, never nonplussed for words, answered:

" 'When you were a tadpole;
And I was a fish
In the Paleozoic time,
And side by side
On the Umbrian tide,
We sprawled through the ooze and slime;
Or skittered with many a caudal flip
Through the depths of the Cambrian fen;
My heart was rife with the joy of life;—
For I loved you even then.' "

Richard had, finally, rather reluctantly, consented to Maxine's plan for engaging in foreign war work. Deep down in his heart, there was an innate love for his fellow-men, and the blood of patriotism flowed, in surging currents, through his veins.

In a quiet, unostentatious way, he had always contributed, most generously, to all public-spirited movements. At this very time, he was mailing his personal checks, regularly, to all of the social service war organizations. In his own state, when he had recently visited it, he had been the founder of a fund, the object of which, was to provide creature comforts, and a few delicacies and luxuries, for the soldiers from his own community, during their period of service, both at home and abroad.

Richard Radcliffe was the type of patriot, whose work is essential to the maintenance and defense of all governments;

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—the kind of citizen, whose services are the first to be solicited when the country is in danger, and the first to be forgotten, when that danger has been overcome.

From the very first, when Richard had opposed Maxine's plan to go to France, he had secretly admired her courage and altruism;—indeed, Maxine's course of action had strengthened and re-invigorated Richard's own deep sense of patriotism, and love for his country.

On the day when she was to sail, Richard secured permission from the Custom House officer, to go with her, aboard the steamer. In these perilous times, so much secrecy had to be attached to all information, concerning sailings, that it was quite out of the question for Richard to send packages to the ship. His arms were loaded with flowers, and other gifts, when he went aboard the steamship *Aquitania*. He carried one box, which he requested Maxine not to open, until the ship was out to sea.

“Now, that you are going, I have made up my mind that I shall move heaven and earth, to try to get a commission in the army, for myself. If they will accept me, I shall make every effort to get to France at the earliest possible time.

“I can't bear the idea of your going, while I stay at home. I feel that my service to the country will be, at least, doubled in efficiency, if I can serve on the same ground on which you are serving,—even though we may not be able to see each other, but seldom. Look for me, for I am going to try my best to come,” said Richard, the last moment before he bade Maxine Good-Bye. When he kissed her, he realized that it was a concentrated surrender of his sensibilities and his soul, to the one woman in the world, who could ever make him happy.

As soon as the steamer was under way, Maxine, in the

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quiet loneliness of her state-room, opened the package which Richard had last handed to her. It contained a platinum wrist-watch, encircled in deeply set, finely cut diamonds. The bracelet was made of small platinum chains, attached to each side of the rim of diamonds. Underneath this gift, was a note, folded over the satin lining of the box. It read:

“Dearest:

I hope that this little time-piece will continue to tell you a truthful story, every time you look at it, until time shall record the humiliating defeat of our enemies, and the triumphant victory of ourselves and our Allies. I hope that every time, you hear it tick, you can hear it saying to you, over and over again ‘Every day I love you better than yesterday, and every tomorrow, I will love you better than today, until the end of time, which shall be eternity, which shall have no end,—no more than shall our love for each other.’

“Every time that the second hands move around a minute, you will know that I am thinking of you,—and every time that the minute hands move around an hour, you will know that I have sent my best thoughts to heaven for you,—by holding communion with the Great Supreme Power, which, I trust, some way, some how, some where, some time, will deliver us to each other, for our eternal happiness.

“And now, Good-Bye, dear heart, until we meet again, in safety and Divine love. My spirit is always with you, wherever you may be and whatever you are doing.

“Devotedly,
“*Richard.*”

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Before Maxine had finished reading the letter, she was weeping copious, generous tears, so big and soulful, that Richard would have pronounced them in entire keeping with the warmth and intensity of her emotions, and the spontaneous sympathy of her genuine, large heart.

CHAPTER XII

Eleanor Tries to Win Back Richard's Affections

“**I** WOULD rather die than to have him know that he has me continually worried by his inattention and indifference; and I would rather endure annihilation than to go on suffering in silence, from day to day.”

Such were Eleanor Radcliffe's reflections, as she hung up the receiver, after a telephone conversation with Richard, during which time he had revealed to her, on the long distance, that he would be unable to spend the week-end in Washington.

Eleanor admitted to herself, reluctantly, that there was, undeniably, an infinite chasm, between herself and her husband.

Was he interested in someone else? Or was it an actual fact, that his duties, in connection with the War Administration, were taking all of his time, as he had represented matters to her? Eleanor knew that whenever she had been with Richard, of late, — which had been rather infrequently, that he had not been himself. He always seemed to be under a strain, — full of uneasiness and impatience, — always in haste, with some important matter on his mind, which seemed to require his concentrated attention, even when he was spending only a few hours, or a day, in the Fairchild home.

Eleanor had been exceedingly annoyed, by Richard's

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negligence, for more than a year now. Her annoyance and irritability were accentuated by the fact, that her mother and sisters had begun to detect that there was something wrong. Mrs. Fairchild was a woman of advanced years now, without the physical resistance of middle-age, and recently, it had been apparent to Eleanor, that her mother was worried. It was true that the relations, between mother and daughter, had not always been as they should have been, because Eleanor, even as a girl, had been rather difficult for her mother to understand. However, she had always cherished a greater affection for her mother, than for anyone else, and she suffered from the consciousness of Mrs. Fairchild's unhappiness; or, perhaps, it would be nearer the truth to say, that her pride suffered, from the humiliation which came to her, from the knowledge that her mother and sisters, could not help but observe that she was, no longer, the recipient of her husband's devotion.

“Not only for my own satisfaction, but for the sake of proving to them that Richard is still loyal to me, and entertains his old-time fondness for me, — I would like to manage to win back his affections; — but the question is, how can I go about this discreetly? My pride is so wounded, by his continued remissness.”

Thus, did Eleanor dwell upon the great problem, which confronted her. She was thoughtful enough, observing enough, and studious enough, to know, that, if she were to give up the solution of this problem, it would indicate a vital weakness in her character. She spent much time, alone, in her room. She had many nervous, sleepless nights.

At last, she made up her mind that she would address a letter to Richard's New York office, and tell him that if he would let her know when he could spend a little time at the

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old home, that she would invite Senator and Mrs. Wainwright, to dine with them. She knew that Richard liked the Senator, and the relations, between herself and Mrs. Wainwright, had always been cordial and agreeable.

Richard answered Eleanor's letter promptly, and assured her that he would come to Washington the following Saturday, and that it would afford him no small degree of pleasure to see the Wainwrights once more.

Within a half hour after Eleanor received Richard's letter, she was in the shop of one of the leading modistes of Washington. She found a stylish, distinctive gown of rich, chiffon velvet, — black, with fringed tassels hanging from the right side, — caught at the waist-line by a silver ornament of elegant design and workmanship. The costume was exceedingly becoming to Eleanor, as the first glance in the mirror assured her.

“What is the price?” she asked.

“Three hundred twenty-five dollars,” said the saleslady.

Eleanor deliberated. She had never paid more than two hundred dollars for her smartest gown; and she would not have considered making the purchase of so expensive a costume, as the one just shown to her, if she had not felt that her pride, her heart, and a fight for her whole happiness, were at stake.

“It is a little more than I intended to pay,” remarked Eleanor.

“It requires but very slight alteration, and it is perfectly stunning on you,” ejaculated the saleswoman.

Eleanor continued to look searchingly into the mirror, — turning herself at every angle, to get the benefit of the various reflections in the looking-glasses, which surrounded her on all sides.

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Finally, she said: "Very well, send it."

When Saturday evening came, Eleanor made a very pleasing and favorable impression, not only on her guests, but even upon Richard himself, who took note of the fact, that, for some reason, his wife was looking surprisingly well. He did not tell her this, — but with her keen surveillance of her husband, on this particular occasion, she knew that he looked upon her approvingly, so far as her personal appearance was concerned.

"I want to secure a commission in the army, of such rank as will enable me to render the highest service, of which I am capable, during this war," suggested Richard to Senator Wainwright, while they were smoking their cigars, on the side veranda of the Fairchild home, — immediately following the dinner.

"You are serving so well, right where you are, that I doubt, very much, whether you can do any more for the country, as an officer in the army. Of course, if you want me to, I will exercise my best influence, to obtain a commission for you," volunteered the Senator.

"Very well, go ahead," said Richard. "There are plenty of men who can do the work which I am doing right now. The sooner that I can be relieved of my present duties, the better it will suit me. I'm getting tired of being where I have to witness so much dishonesty and such audacious and colossal graft.

"A lot of these men, who have been 'pikers' all their lives, are simply coining money now. This war will make, at least, twenty thousand new millionaires in the United States. It's a Hell of a country in some ways, isn't it? And yet, what can anybody do? I know of a man, right now, who is double-crossing, not only this government, but

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the French government, as well. He has a contract to furnish gasoline for them both, and he consigns the shipments, at the time he sends them, to whichever government will pay him the maximum price. He, and many of the other profiteers, are not complying with the standardized prices for commodities. It's just impossible to 'round up' such people," exclaimed Richard, disgustedly.

"Yes, that is one of the attendant evils of all wars. Those who are in a position to take advantage of inflated prices, and whose patriotism is a mere surface proposition, without a single element of sincerity or honesty, back of it, always reap huge profits. After the war is over, and the period of reconstruction and deflation sets in, then it will be the consumer,—the general public, who will pay the bills and suffer most, from the policies of economy and retrenchment, which will follow," replied the Senator, in analytic mood.

Awhile later, just before Richard and his guest went into the house, prior to the Wainwrights' leaving, Radcliffe reminded the Senator to let him know, as soon as anything "turned up," concerning the commission in the army.

Richard went back to New York on the Congressional Limited, Sunday afternoon. Eleanor heard no more from him for a fortnight. In the meantime, she had received a telegram from Freida, announcing the latter's marriage to Knut Nielsen, who, for the last few years, had taken care of the lawn and gardens of the Radcliffe home, and, when occasion required it, had driven the automobile for Eleanor.

She wondered whether Richard had been advised of Freida's marriage, so she wrote him a note of mere in-

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quiry, relating to this subject only. He answered, briefly, that Freida had telegraphed him the news, and that he had wired her in reply, to have her husband take up his residence at Number Twenty-Three Arbor Court, where Freida had been living, with her sister as a companion, during the Radcliffes' absence in Washington.

The summer before, Richard had explained to Eleanor, before she went home, that he had been obliged to bring Argus East with him, for the treatment of the pernicious malady, which afflicted him, and that he had committed him to the custody of an experienced caretaker, who had brought him back to perfect health. This piece of news had delighted Eleanor, because it had relieved her mind of all anxiety, concerning the damage, which Argus might do to her household possessions, while she was away from home.

This made one less thing for her to worry about, during the months of harassment and depression, while she had been worried over Richard's lack of interest in her.

She was beginning to have more serious misgivings than formerly, relative to Richard's prolonged absences from home. Accordingly, she decided that she would make a trip to New York, on her own initiative, — with the idea of investigating, in some way, the possible causes of her husband's strange conduct. Then, too, her suspicions had been further aroused, by receiving in the mail, a voluntary letter, or rather an announcement, from a well-known detective agency, offering, in formal manner, to be of assistance in matters requiring confidential investigation. She wondered why, out of a clear sky, she should have received any such communication. Perhaps, someone knew something of indiscretions in her husband's life, which she did not know, and they wanted for, either mischief-making, or commercial reasons, to inform her;

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— or, possibly, the agency had only taken her name from a list of the wives of prominent men, whom they were circularizing,—merely as a matter of advertising.

Anyway, she went to New York, and proceeded, directly after her arrival to the office of The Always-Find-Them Detective Agency, where she consulted the manager, Martyndale. Altogether, this was the most difficult, and for her, the most courageous thing, in her own estimation, which she had ever done. It was so humiliating for her to put herself in the position, where she must relate to a total stranger, her most personal and private affairs. When she apologized, for what she felt called upon to say, Martyndale simply said, in a quiet, affable manner: “That is our business, you know. We have to do such things every day, for the protection of women like yourself, who are not fairly treated. And so, you must feel that when you come to us, — you come for service, just as you do when you go to your modiste, or banker, or attorney. There is no reason why, when a woman of your dignity, and standing, and position, believes that she has reason to suspect her husband of misconduct in any way, whether it be infidelity, or something else, she should not give herself the benefit of all the assistance and protection which she can get, and to which she is entitled. That is why we are here,” concluded Martyndale, while he endeavored, in his suave manner, to put his client at her ease.

Eleanor knew, in her own mind,—regardless of Martyndale’s experienced methods in dealing with women, — that it was an evidence of weakness to take such matters to such sources for solution. In spite of the arguments, to the contrary, which she had had with herself, she felt that she was doing something common, — not at all in keeping with the established standards and traditions of the Fairchild family.

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However, she related her story to Martyndale, who assured her that her case would receive the most expert attention, which the resources of his office could give it, and that he would furnish her with a report, in a few days.

Eleanor decided that it would be best to remain in the city, until she received some news from Martyndale. She did not want to endure any more suspense than was necessary, and besides, she did not want to risk the possibility of any of the members of her family finding out the object of her visit to New York, — until she could be sure, one way or the other, that her suspicions were either illusional or well-grounded;—if the former, then she would dismiss the matter absolutely, and seek to discover some other cause for Richard's negligence.

Never before in her life, had Eleanor been alone, in a hotel. It all seemed so strange. Whenever she had traveled, Richard had always accompanied her, except, a few times, when she had gone from Mount Olympic to Washington, D. C. She had in mind, when she came to New York, that she would do some shopping, but now that she had committed the secret of her heart to a stranger, she found herself laboring under a nervous strain, which prevented her from proceeding with even her ordinary activities. The most that she did was to walk along Fifth Avenue window-shopping, and then go back to her room to wait for the telephone to ring, hoping that she would hear something, which would relieve her severe, mental tension.

She did manage to invite two of her old acquaintances to luncheon, — at different times, so as to lighten the awful monotony of these uninteresting days. But she found little to say to her friends, and when they offered to return her courtesies, she was in too agitated a state of mind to accept their invitations.

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On the seventh day of her sojourn, she determined to break away from herself long enough to make a few purchases, which would help to account to her mother and sisters for her pastimes in New York. Naturally, they assumed that she was with Richard. She was a little anxious lest he should telephone her at the Fairchild home;—but she thought that there was little danger of this, because in the last letter, which she had received from him, he had told her that he would not be in Washington for, at least, two weeks. She had averted the possibility of any letters from Richard being delivered at her old home, by instructing the postman, confidentially, to forward her mail, until further notice, to her New York address.

When she returned to her room, in an up-town hotel, she found a message waiting for her. She called the number, written on the telephone memorandum,—only to be informed that Martyndale wished to see her, at her earliest convenience. She told him that if he would come, directly, to the mezzanine floor of her hotel, that she would see him there. He lost no time in keeping the appointment. Eleanor actually trembled with fear and consternation of mind, as Martyndale approached. She was already waiting for him, in a secluded corner of the parlor floor. He took a seat beside her, and then, in low, calm tones, he said:

“Well, like many other good women, I think you have made a mistake. Our most skilful and most conscientious experts have followed Mr. Radcliffe with unabating vigilance, for a week now. He lives very quietly at the Belmont Hotel;—dines only with his business associates,—works very hard in his office, for about eight hours every day,—employs only men in stenographic and secretarial positions, and altogether, leads, what I would call, a very prosaic and un-

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exciting life. He went to the theatre one evening last week, — to the Hippodrome, but he took with him, some Congressman from Washington, — I think his name is Hargreaves. That is all that we have found out so far,” concluded Martyndale.

“Well, what about Argus,—his dog, you know? Doesn’t he go to see him?” inquired Eleanor.

“Oh, yes. He did motor, one day, to Great Neck, Long Island, to visit the dog. Some real elderly woman is taking care of him. She lives in New York most of the time, but I understand, that at present, she is spending a few weeks out of the city, — looking after the home of Charles Rygate, a wealthy, New York insurance man, who owns a big country estate, called Windermere. Of course, as I said, this woman is an old lady, — very unattractive, and entirely out of the range of possibilities, so far as Mr. Radcliffe’s affections would be concerned,” explained Martyndale, who wished to emphasize the fact that he had not neglected, to follow to the end, every possible clue.

Eleanor breathed a deep sigh of relief. Alas, what strange, capricious trick of the Fates, by a timely quirk,— had twisted and directed events in such manner that Mary Ann Milton had, on the very week of Maxine’s departure, been invited, by Mrs. Rygate, who it will be remembered, was a devoted friend of Maxine, to spend several weeks at Windermere, where she was to keep an eye on the servants of the household, during the absence of the Rygates at Palm Beach?

Mrs. Rygate’s happy thought to, thus, do herself a favor, and at the same time, to alleviate Mary Ann’s loneliness, was apparently destined to bring quiescence to Eleanor’s perturbed spirits.

Hence, the truth of the poet’s words:

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“The world goes around; the sun sets on despair;
The morrow makes it hope.
Each little life thinks the great axle
Of the Universe turns on its fate;
And finds impertinence in joy or grief
Conflicting with its own; but fate is woven
From unnoted threads; each life is centered
In the life of all; and from the meanest root
Some fibre runs, which chance or destiny
May intertwine with those that feed
The force or guiding thought to
Rule the world; so goes the world around.”

Eleanor was gratified, beyond words, by Martyndale's report. But still, she was perplexed, while she reminisced on the subject of her husband's behavior. “No doubt,” she thought to herself, “my imagination has played pranks with me. Richard has always told me that I let my imaginative faculties run away with me. I remember how suspicious I was of him that time at the matinee, when I saw him with Loyola's friend, — Miss Marling.”

After Martyndale left, Eleanor went upstairs, and found under her door, a letter from Loyola Hargreaves, written en route from Mount Olympic to Washington, D. C., where she was to join Congressman Hargreaves. In this letter, Loyola expressed her regrets that she had not been able to leave home earlier, so that she might have seen her old friend, Maxine Marling, before she sailed for France.

Mrs. Hargreaves went on to say that Maxine had been spending all her time in war work, speaking to the troops in the Eastern military camps, for many months, before she went Over-Seas.

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Thus, once more, did Fate play kindly into the hands of Maxine and Richard.

Eleanor was so elated with her own mental vindication of Richard, that she made up her mind to telephone his office, and say to him that she had been in New York, on a shopping expedition, and she had been so very busy, that she had not been able to get into touch with him before. She would make the excuse, too, that she had called his office several times, when he was out. She would tell him, also, that she had gone to another hotel, because it was more convenient for some of her old friends to come to see her, there. She would make him believe, that she had not stopped at his hotel, for fear that she might disturb him, or interrupt some of his business engagements. She knew that it would be just as well to give him to understand, for once, that she was not so entirely dependent upon him, that she could not make a move without him.

She succeeded in her first attempt to get him on the telephone. He did not try to conceal his astonishment, — that his wife had come to New York and spent several days there, without letting him know. There was something so extraordinary about this unprecedented circumstance, that it aroused his curiosity, and came very near to exciting his suspicion. But, Eleanor conducted her conversation, so cleverly and adroitly, that she convinced Richard, without apparent effort, that “things had just happened that way.” She put her husband off his guard, so that he had no more idea of the object of her visit to New York, than Eleanor had of the actual reason why Richard had not spent more time in Washington, during the past year.

“When are you going back home?” Eleanor inquired of him, on the telephone.

Richard was so flabbergasted, by the surprise which

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Eleanor had given him, that he replied, almost without hesitation:

"I'm going to Washington on the five o'clock train, on the Pennsylvania. Have you bought your ticket, or shall I get it for you?"

"No, I haven't. You had better get it," answered Eleanor, while she rejoiced, in her heart, that she would have the opportunity, once more, to travel with her husband, for five hours, in a Pullman car. Her cheeks were flushed with excitement, and her eyes sparkled, while she contemplated the pleasure before her. She made herself look her very best, before she went to the train to meet Richard.

She was waiting for him at the Pennsylvania gate to Train Number Five, when he arrived, hurriedly, with his grip in one hand and tickets in the other.

"I couldn't get Pullman seats next to each other," he explained, but possibly, the man in the seat next to you will exchange with me. I will speak to him about it," said Richard, as they entered the car. The other traveler complied, cheerfully, with Richard's request.

During the journey, they talked about the newsiest events of the week, such as the capture of Reval by the Germans; — and the critical consequences, which were likely to ensue, if a Peace should be signed between the Bolshevists, on the one side, and the Central Powers, on the other. Then Richard remarked, that he was terribly tired, — closed his eyes, and reposed himself, for awhile.

Eleanor sat quietly, reflecting upon many things. Finally, in her reminiscences, she contrasted the circumstances of this journey in the Pullman, with those of a much more extended trip, sixteen years before, when she had started, with her handsome young husband, in the Pullman car,

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Montevideo, to make that long, transcontinental migration, which had terminated in the events of the present hour.

Alas! What a contrast existed, between that happy time, and the commonplaceness of this particular journey. And yet, the happiness which permeated her whole being at this time, was comparable to, but quite different in its inspired qualities, from that which she had experienced on that eventful day.

It was Saturday. Richard remained in Washington until Tuesday afternoon. He was detained until a very late hour Monday evening, — as he was called into an important conference of representatives, who were authorized to make contracts for supplies for the Government.

He returned to the Fairchild home to spend the night. He found that Eleanor had not retired, but was waiting for him, by the fire-place, in the back parlor of the old home,—the very room in which she had received him so many times, during the days of their courtship. She was gowned in a soft, clinging, white Canton crepe frock of Grecian style:—and in spite of the fact, that she looked older than her years,—owing, no doubt, to the vital energy which she had misdirected and consumed in fretful nagging and non-constructive pursuits,—the warm glow of the fire and the delicate, white, lace about her neck, accentuated the softness of her costume to such a degree, that the hard, nervous lines of her face were more peaceably subdued than they had been before, in many years. She looked better than she had for the past several months. The tension, under which she had been living, had been relieved, and the nervousness, which she had experienced, was noticeably disappearing. Even Richard, himself, whose thoughts were traveling to foreign lands, over and over again,—a countless

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number of times every hour and every day,—could not help but observe that Eleanor's harshness of speech was giving way to a certain quality of smoothness and more harmonious expression. She seemed less self-centered than she had ever been in her life. The discordant notes of her conversation were much less evident. The self-assertion, which had always made itself manifest in her behavior, was not so apparent. The self-confidence, which had characterized her demeanor was less perceptible. She was, altogether, in a passive mood,—without her usual resistance and impatience. She was thinking more of others, and less of herself. She was in pensive contemplation,—seriously, but rather sadly, thoughtful.

After Richard had discussed with her, in rather cursory and desultory manner, the events of the day, Eleanor said to him:

“I visited an orphan asylum today, to carry to the children some nuts, candy and fruit; and I chatted with a most attractive, interesting, little boy, about six years of age.

“He had such snappy, bright eyes,—such an intelligent expression,—such an appealing, round, healthy face, that I actually wanted to bring him home with me.

“What would you have said if I had?”

“So far as I am concerned,—at this time of my life,—I do not wish to adopt any children,—if that is what you mean. On the other hand, I have no objections, if you wish to take a child to bring up. But in doing so, you must understand, that it is entirely a matter of your own responsibility, with which I shall have nothing to do,—further than to keep my purse open for any advantages which it will be necessary to give to the child. I would not, however, make

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such a child my heir, or adopt him, legally, as a member of my family.

“It is taking too big a chance. Such a boy as you describe, might bring you comfort, in years to come, and he might break your heart, — and again, he might grow to be just an average, mediocre, sort of a cuss, who would never reflect either credit or discredit upon you.

“Personally, I want to help all the deserving, young people whom I can, — to secure an education and advancement in life, but I do not want any of them to be so close to me, that if they make a failure of life, it is going to wreck my happiness.

“Of course, with one’s own child, it is very different. There is a greater depth of affection, and it is only right that if the parents make a failure of bringing up their own child, that they should bear, gracefully, any tragedy which comes into their lives, through their own children.

“But I believe it is going far beyond the call of duty, to invite, voluntarily, such a risk as would be involved in the responsibility of rearing, educating, and determining a career, for a child not one’s own,” concluded Richard, with an air of definiteness.

He was ruminating, in his heart, over the events of about twelve years ago, when his own infant son, only a half hour old, passed into the great unknown. He reflected upon all that the future would hold for him, if he had this son for a daily companion now. It would make life very different. Then, too, Eleanor would have meant more to him, if she had given the best part of her life to the perpetuation of the Radcliffe name.

“Possibly,” he thought to himself, “her conscience has been giving her some trouble, — else she would not have

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been thinking of adopting a boy." Before this time though, she had never indicated, in any way, that she had suffered any remorse over the fact that she had elected to choose a painless birth of her own baby. Richard could not figure out whether Eleanor had been cogitating over the big mistake, which he believed that she had made, at the time of the child's birth, or whether her idea of adopting a son, was to bring a steady, affectionate companionship into her rather lonely life. It occurred to him, also, that the thought might be taking root in Eleanor's mind, because she believed that it would give her an opportunity to win back something of his old time affection for her.

He did not know, that within recent weeks, Eleanor's mother had suggested to her that the adoption of a child would, possibly, prove to be the most practical and expedient means of strengthening her hold upon her husband.

In fact, Mrs. Fairchild had gone so far as to say to Eleanor, during one of the latter's erratic moods: "It is very difficult to sustain, for a life-time, the affections of a husband, who has been deprived of parenthood. I have always believed that if you could only have endured the excruciating pain, at the time of your little boy's birth, and thus avoided the necessity of surrendering all means of helping yourself at the time, that your life would have been happier. When the doctors told you that this was the only thing to do, — to keep for yourself sufficient strength and consciousness to enable you to help yourself and the child, — if you could only have made up your mind to go through it, things would not have been as they are, between you and Richard, today."

As a rule, Eleanor resented receiving many suggestions or much advice, even from her own mother, but at the time

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of this conversation, between Mrs. Fairchild and her daughter, Eleanor was in such a perturbed, distressed state of mind, that she gave only earnest and serious meditation to her mother's pointed remarks.

“And, as to the matter of adopting a child, I would do whatever Richard thinks best about it. I would not think of making any such drastic change in my family affairs, without his full consent,” said Mrs. Fairchild to Eleanor, at the conclusion of their conversation, concerning the trying domestic situation, in which her daughter found herself.

Hence, Eleanor had decided, that since Richard did not approve of her proposed course of action, that she would give up the idea of bringing a child into their home, — especially, since he had made it clear that he would assume no responsibility, in connection with the matter.

Eleanor was still perplexed, as to what she could do, which would bring about a reinstatement of Richard's attentions and affections. Even though she had believed, ever since she had received Martyndale's report, that there was no other woman in her husband's life,—she was still at a loss to understand Richard's apparent unconsciousness of the fact that his wife required some of his old-time attention. That he was indifferent, to the idea of spending much of his time with her, was obvious. There was nothing in his conduct, or attitude toward her, which seemed to indicate a positive aversion to her, — and yet, there was a great, broad gulf between them, — a big, indefinable something, which was a barrier to any close relationship, — even bordering on compatibility.

The buoyancy of spirits, which had taken possession of her, when Martyndale had assured her that there was nothing inappropriate, or unbecoming, in Richard's life, had sub-

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sided, now that she found her efforts to win him back, futile and useless.

It would have been difficult, for the most experienced psycho-analyst to determine, whether in the depth of her heart, she really cherished the highest affection and most exalted sentiment, of which she was capable, toward her husband; or whether, she simply suffered, abnormally, from a condition of wounded pride, due to the repression of desires, which were consciously rejected, but sub-consciously persistent. That her pride was the dominant element of her character, there could be no doubt. Up to the last eighteen months of her life, she had always been able to indulge herself in the belief that her position, as the wife of Richard Radcliffe, was unimpeachable. Now, she began to feel that this was not true. For more than fourteen years, she had been able to do very much as she pleased about the administration of her domestic affairs. Occasionally, Richard had asserted himself, as in the instance, concerning Argus; but for the most part, Eleanor had had her own way,—having reigned, during this period of years, as the feminine monarch in her own household. As matters now were, she did not know, exactly, where she stood.

In this confused state of mind, she was trying to get her bearings again, to work herself out of her perplexity,—to solve the greatest problem which had ever come into her life.

As she was thus engrossed with all her mental faculties, she turned her attention to the reading of all kinds of philosophies, so-called progressive creeds and isms, with the hope of finding not only a solution of the grave matter which confronted her, but a soothing consolation for the grieved spirit which almost overpowered her. She resolved that she

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would prove herself bigger than her problem. She determined that she would find some way of re-engaging her husband's former interest.

One afternoon, when she was almost engulfed by her depressed spirits, she seized upon a volume of philosophical literature and opened it, hap-hazard, to these paragraphs:

“The sense man makes vows and promises to the flesh. Spiritual growth breaks these promises. The only true friendship, or love, is that which does not bind; makes no vows, knowing that a thing can not be held on to, if it would be kept.

“As soon as we clutch our treasure tightly, it is crushed. We must allow our friends, and our loves, to go free; let them pass in and out of our lives, according to infinite Wisdom. If we would hold them, we must let them go. Our own can not be taken from us. If they are our own, they will come back some day, somewhere, for there is no time in Spirit.

“If one seems a true friend today, and an adversary, tomorrow, do not censure, or try to renew the smoldering flames of the old friendship, but only smile and say: ‘It is all a part of the Divine plan in his life and in mine. I am cut loose from a certain bondage, and through him, — his word, his prayer, his suggestion, I am now free. Therefore, I need him no more. I must learn the great lesson of detachment.’

“But who knows? Who can say that this is the end of the friendship? There is no end to anything that is of God, and so, when the flesh has evolved into Spirit, and we see, as God, the All-Perfect sees, we shall again meet our friend, standing in the white light of that perfection. Then we, being also perfected, and seeing with the clear eyes of spirit, will know that our own can not be taken from us.

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“We, too, shall be on the topmost round of the ladder, whose rungs are the olden friendships, ties, and loves, which have lifted us out of the darkness, until we stand on the last rung, which is Sinai, face to face with God.

“Then we can look down the steps of the ladder, and know that nothing of friendship and love is ever lost.”

CHAPTER XIII.

Maxine in France

“THEY are bombarding Paris with long range guns, at a distance of seventy-five miles.” This was the alarming piece of news, which Captain Wells announced to Maxine, when he went to meet her, at the steamer *Aquitania*, at Bordeaux.

Both Richard and Senator Wainwright had cabled to General Dimock, to send an aide to escort her, from Bordeaux to Paris.

“The Allies are just beginning to wake up, to what a real German victory would mean to them. They understand better what the awful consequences would be, since the atrocious peace of Brest Litovsk was made. There are some American troops in the lines, but the bulk of the American army is in the United States. The attack upon the British in the Somme region has proven to be a tremendous disaster; and the British army has been driven back in such disorder, as no British army has ever known before. The unwarranted losses of thousands of guns, and scores of thousands of prisoners, were due to the utter incompetence of many of the higher British officers. About one hundred tanks were abandoned, because they ran out of petrol.

“Fresh troops from America will soon be pouring into France, by the hundreds of thousands. I heard General Dimock say that you would be sent to address as many Amer-

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icans as possible in the first army sectors.” Such was the information which Captain Wells communicated to Maxine, on their journey to Paris, where she was to report first, for her assignment to duty.

The young captain was a well-groomed, good-natured, energetic officer, who took his responsibilities as seriously as any American, who had just arrived in France, could possibly do.

The Paris, which soon revealed itself to Maxine’s eyes, was very different from the gay, exuberant, French capital, with all of its emotion and vivacity, which she had visited just before the world war broke out. Now, it was a sad, grave, somber Paris, with an atmosphere of solemnity settled over it,—so depressing in its effects that even the gray, gloomy clouds, which hovered in great, nebulous masses over the city, were in appropriate keeping with the serious, solemn mood of all of the inhabitants,—both civil and military, who dwelt in, or were drawn to, Paris, at that time.

When she presented herself at General Dimock’s office, he received her most cordially, but informed her that it would be some time before he would be able to arrange an appointment for her with General Pershing, who was now occupied with organization duties in a section quite remote from Paris. Meanwhile, the General assured her that he, and his subordinates, would take matters into their own hands, and make such arrangements as would bring her into touch with the American troops.

There was a cablegram waiting for her at the Grand Hotel.

It read:

“My constant thoughts are with you. What I have lost the boys in France have gained. I know

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that your presence there will be a blessing to all with whom you come in contact as your life is a continual benediction wherever you go.

“Richard.”

Maxine wrote him at much length, acknowledging with gratitude his treasured remembrance, which she had found in the package, which he presented to her on shipboard. She spoke in happy reminiscent terms, of the time which they had spent together,—so ideally, and concluded by telling him, that every letter which she received from him would be such an inspiration to her, that the efficiency of her work in the army would be doubled and trebled.

Maxine adapted herself to the new environment, in which she found herself, with an ease and grace which had characterized her whole life. She took all hardships as privileges accorded to her, for the opportunity of service. She met every situation, whole-heartedly, and her enthusiasm for her work soon communicated itself to the other civilian attachés of social service organizations appendaged to the army; and began, likewise, to express itself in the spirit of the service of the soldiers, as they proceeded from their headquarters toward their front line duties.

Maxine, from the date of her arrival in France, had taken her work very seriously. She felt, keenly, her responsibility, and worked with unabated zeal, earnestness and devotion. She understood definitely the purpose for which she had come to France. There was no slacker blood in her veins.

She spent none of her valuable time courting the favor of officers, only so far as it was necessary, in order that she might gain better vantage points, and avenues of access, to the needs of the private soldiers.

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Her letter of introduction to General Pershing brought her a White Pass, issued upon his authority. This obviated the necessity of much military red-tape, and minimized the delays and inconveniences, to which many civilian war-workers were necessarily subjected.

She made her first appearance before the soldiers in the automatic weapon schools at Gondrecourt and Langres. The spontaneous outburst of applause, which greeted her first utterances, exceeded that which had been accorded to her in the camps back home. Her success was triumphant,—phenomenal,—and her popularity in the army won for her, the appellation of the Soldiers' Sweetheart, while still other endearing epithets applied to her were Sister, Comrade, Buddy, and Pal.

During her first eight weeks in the army, she had given little thought to herself, or her personal affairs, beyond the necessity of keeping her health in such condition, as would assure her the privilege of uninterrupted service. The call to duty was too urgent; the needs of the time were too great, to esteem one's individual matters to be of any great moment. She had devoted herself, assiduously, to the men in the ranks.

The message which she brought to the troops was essentially this:

“A young man, who was just starting in business, addressed this inquiry to the editor of the New York Sun: ‘Can a young man, living in the City of New York, who earns only ten dollars a week, lead a good, Christian life?’ And the editor of the Sun, having a very keen sense of humor, answered: ‘A young man, living in the City of New York, and earning only ten dollars a week, can’t lead anything else but a good, Christian life.’”

“I suppose you boys think that a private soldier in the

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American Expeditionary Forces, who receives only thirty or thirty-three dollars a month, can't do anything else in France, but lead a good, Christian life.

“After all, if we go from the humorous to the serious, I'm sure that we will all agree that we are here for a very earnest reason, and an exceedingly, important purpose.

“The object of all sane, and efficient government, is to secure the greatest good for the greatest number,—and to give to the individual, the highest degree of liberty, compatible with public welfare.

“There are two contrasting and conflicting ideals represented by the Allies and the Central Powers in this war. The ideal of the Central Powers is to establish, for all time, an Imperial Pan-Germanic state, which shall rule the world through the processes of absolutism,—sacrificing individuals entirely to the interests of the Central Government. This system is very dangerous, full of impending and hazardous evils, because it destroys initiative, fosters subserviency, and perpetuates Imperialism. If this pernicious system of autocracy should gain control of the world, and maintain a place of ascendancy, through future history, the opportunities for progress and advancement for each and all of us, would be so largely diminished, that future generations,—that is, the great masses of people, would be so circumscribed in their individual activities, that there would be very little stimulus to individual, constructive action. The incentive for personal achievement would be largely lacking, except to those who occupied superior places of power.

“The ideal of the Allied Governments, now supported and reinforced by the United States, is to maintain and perpetuate the influences of nationalism, but not Pan-Imperialism, or Pan-Hellenism. The institution of competitive

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nationalism must survive for a long time yet, in order to insure economic progress. Internationalism is something which we may look forward to, ultimately,—possibly,—but in a modified form, which shall not destroy nationalism.

“But at the moment, we have no deep concern with internationalism, other than that it is a beautiful ideal, something to contemplate,—to look forward to,—to save us now from too much indulgence in a spirit of discord among those allied nations, which are fighting for, and representing the same ideals.

“The Allies, then, are concerned most deeply, with the preservation and perpetuation of the ideal of nationalism; based upon the doctrine that the development and progress of the individual consults the highest interest of the nation;—that, strong nations always represent a combination of virile, progressive individuals and that the strength of the nation is in direct proportion to the intelligence and development of the individuals who constitute it.

“This, then, is the ideal which we have been sent here to cherish, represent, and fight for. At least, you have been sent to fight for it, and no matter what the cost, I know that you each feel, within yourselves, that the sacrifice, which you have been called upon to make, is worthy of your service.

“Before I left home, I met a woman who had received the tragic news of her son’s falling, during the very first week, when the American troops were sent into the lines. This word came to her, after the first American casualties. She told me, while she repressed the tears, which she exercised the utmost self-control to restrain, that she had no other reason, except to feel proud and grateful, that she had been able to make such a vital contribution to the cause of humanity.

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“After all, the conquest of fear, at this time, is the most important thing for all of us. It is within our power to commune, quietly, with ourselves. When we do this, the thoughts which enter our consciousness are soothing and satisfying. We know, then, that no great evil can beset us;—that there is nothing which can harm, or destroy the inner, immortal man. We know, then, that we are bigger than circumstances; that we are superior to our environments,—that we are the masters of ourselves, and of our fates. Thus, we school ourselves to the Great Lesson of detachment, from material wordly things, and attachment to Divine, eternal things.

“We must know that ‘God is in his Heaven; all is well with the world.’

“We must, at all times, be ‘Soothed and sustained by an unfaltering trust.’

“If we are called upon to make the Supreme Sacrifice, we must know that it is because our power for Good is to be accentuated, enhanced and multiplied in volume.

“We must believe, so strongly and so earnestly, in the ideals of our own country, that we shall be willing to meet any test, and make any sacrifice that we may be able to apply and express them.

“I am reminded of the story of three Americans, who were once in Paris, on the Fourth of July, and since there were no national festivities in Paris, on that date, a party of gallant, distinguished Frenchmen gave a banquet, in honor of these visiting Americans. The oldest member of the American party was a man well on in years, with much experience in official and diplomatic life. He was called upon to respond to a toast, when he said: ‘Here’s to the health of the United States, bounded on the North by the Dominion of Canada,

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on the East by the Atlantic Ocean,—on the South by Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico, and on the West by the Pacific Ocean.’ He retired, amidst enthusiastic applause.

“The second member of the party, was a man of middle age, whose prestige was well-assured in international circles. He followed the first speaker, saying: ‘Here’s to the health of the United States, bounded on the North by the North Pole, on the East by the Continent of Europe, on the South by the South Pole, and on the West by the Continent of Asia.’ He received vociferous cheers.

“The third member of the party, was a young, unsophisticated man, who was serving as private secretary to the delegation of American visitors. He was rather self-conscious and embarrassed, when he was called upon to make a speech, in the presence of so many prominent men. As soon as he could compose himself and summon his powers of expression, he said: ‘I have always been considered a very modest man, but I think I can go you one better. Here’s to the health of the United States, bounded on the North by the Aurora Borealis; on the East by the Rising Sun; on the South by the Vernal Equinox, and on the West by the Day of Judgment.’

“And the young man was right. The United States of America knows no bounds. America, and the spirit of America, penetrate, in some way, and in some degree, to every corner of the world. And when I speak of the spirit of America, I do not mean a spirit of conquest, or aggression, of imperialism, but the spirit of an inner development, which shall be, both internal and external, and which shall contribute to the end that the United States of America shall become, and remain, the ranking nation in the world’s trade. As patriotic Americans, we must all be interested in the

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economic supremacy of the United States. We must, in future, capture our share of the trade of the world, and when this war is over, we must dedicate our best efforts to winning these prizes of foreign trade. We must never lose consciousness of the fact that we are Americans. That fact must tell, in every American industry, enterprise, and achievement.

“The slogan ‘Made in the United States’ must be made to stand for efficiency, and service, and progress. Progress is greater than efficiency. If we put the spirit of creative progress into all that we do, American products will find their way into broader, foreign markets, and in this way, we shall contribute, not only to the standards of national progress, but to those of universal progress.

“We are here for action, whether it be in peace or war. We are not here to take life easily.

“You know that there is a passage in Sanskrit literature, which says: ‘Listen to the exaltation of the dawn; look to this day; for it is life,—the very life of life. In its brief course, lie all the varieties and realities of your existence;—the bliss of growth; the glory of action; the splendor of beauty;—for yesterday is but a dream, and tomorrow is only a vision, and today, well lived, makes every yesterday, a dream of happiness, and every tomorrow, a vision of hope. Look well, therefore, to this day. Such is the Salutation of the Dawn.’

“This war will bring to you all, experiences, which will either bring out the best that there is in you, or the worst that there is in you. War intensifies, both the good and the evil, in human nature. All the tests will not be met upon the battle-field. On the contrary, many of them will be met in your private relationships. I understand that Distinguished Service Crosses and Medals are awarded for bravery in

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action, in going beyond the call of duty, and for conspicuous service, rendered voluntarily, in the face of extreme danger. I believe, however, that any young man, who passes through the Boulevard Italiens, and comes away unscathed, is deserving of a Distinguished Service Cross.

“In closing, I can only commend you, to your higher selves, which constitute a fundamental part of the Supreme Good, which rules over the Universe.

“The world wants men, large-hearted, manly men;—men who will join in the chorus and prolong the psalm of labor and of love; the age wants heroes,—heroes who shall dare to struggle in the solid ranks of truth,—to bear opinion to a loftier seat, to blot out the error of oppression, and lead in a world of universal freedom.”

Such a vital, inspirational address could only bring the hearty demonstrations of applause and appreciation, which it deserved.

Maxine had received several letters from Richard, but often times, the tardiness of the mails deprived her of her letters until they were long over-due, thus interrupting the regularity of their correspondence, but the continuity of their interest in each other, remained unbroken. Richard's letters all emphasized that she was more fortunate than he,—in that Maxine had transferred her whole field of endeavor to an entirely, new atmosphere, where it would be necessary for her to adopt a complete change of mental action; while he was obliged to continue, in the old routine, which governed his life in her absence. He would, he said, inevitably, miss her, more than she would have time to miss him. He was endeavoring to put his business affairs in such order that he could leave his personal matters in competent hands, in the event, that he should be so fortunate as to secure the com-

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mission, which he was seeking in the army. There seemed to be some hesitancy, on the part of those in authority, concerning the expediency and practicability of Richard's contemplated resignation from the post, which he now occupied. It was his business to negotiate numerous contracts for supplies and equipment, necessary for the conduct of the war, and it was not an easy matter to find a man capable of, and willing to take his place.

Richard went on to say that he would keep Maxine advised of all his plans,—to the last detail. He was still spending his time in New York and Washington,—where he saw Eleanor very seldom, and whenever he was at the Fairchild home, it was for visits of brief duration, and when there, he spent his evenings reading about the activities in France, actuated, not only by patriotic interest, but by a desire to translate himself, so far as possible, into the places where,—and circumstances under which, Maxine lived and worked.

Maxine's letters to Richard were filled with descriptions of the events which preceded and followed the military action in the Lys Valley, Aisne, the second battle of the Marne, and Chateau-Thierry. Always, too, they were mentally stimulating, intellectually refreshing; and spiritually invigorating. They never lacked sentiment either.

The value and merit of Maxine's work with the army was not under-estimated by the highest military authorities, from whom she won recognition and distinction. She was awarded a Distinguished Service Cross for her exceptional work in inspiring courage and bravery among the men; and in creating a spirit of unity, harmony, loyalty and determination to fight, to the end, for the good name and welfare of the United States.

Thus far, Maxine had played no favorites among any

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of her "boys," as she called them; although, many of the soldiers had been to talk with her, individually; and had gone away with the feeling that she was very close to them in her sympathies; very near to their own, personal heart-aches and tragedies.

She listened always, with sympathetic ear, to the story of the boy, whose sweetheart back in the States, had forgotten him for another, during his absence, while he was fighting for the very girl who had proven herself utterly unworthy of him.

She heard with patience, the tale of the blue-eyed soldier, whose mother had died, since he had left home to serve his country, and whose last memory was the sweet face of his mother, as she kissed him good-bye, and bade him to go forth, valiantly, to save, not only his own fellow-countrymen, but his brothers across the sea.

She sustained the lad, who had just received the news that his brother had fallen in action, by telling him that the disembodied spirit of his Pal would be with him on the battle-field, to help him to fight with an unprecedented valor.

She spoke words of cheer to the brave heart of the young sergeant, who had been wounded, but who had recovered, sufficiently, to be ready and willing to go back to the lines to stand again in the face of danger and peril.

She went to the hospitals, where she comforted the dying and wounded, with her message of hope for the future, and gratitude, that such as they had been sent to defend their country. There were times when she took the dying in her arms and went with them so far, in spirit and soul, that the illumination of the radiant light of Heaven spread over her countenance; and the brilliant emanations of an Overpower-

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ing Divinity almost drew her, with irrepellent force, into the Kingdom of God, itself.

Many boys, who knew her, had sent for her, after they had been removed to the hospitals and were about to be overtaken by death and again she would go with them right up to the door of the Grim Master, as if to challenge the thought that there was such a thing in the Universe as Death; and welcoming the process of transition, as a re-birth into a larger life of Growth and Action and Beauty and Peace and Love.

But, thus far, her heart had never gone out to one boy more than to another. All were alike to her,—brothers united;—each one a tremendous factor in repelling an all-invading,—deadly foe,—a common enemy of mankind,—a parasite, which had fastened its tentacles of confusion and destruction and murder and slaughter, like a huge octopus, around the bodies and hearts and souls of men, in these awful, trying days, when the world was torn asunder by that unprecedented, bewildering upheaval of a universally, war-tormented population.

Maxine had become so absorbingly interested in her work, of late, that she had, sometimes, found it difficult to write such lengthy letters to Richard, as she had written, during the first few months, after her arrival. Then, too, the thought often passed through her mind, that her life with Richard could probably never be. A permanent alliance between them had seemed hopeless to her, from the very first, and her absence from the United States had, by this time, confirmed her original impressions of doubt, as to the ethics of building her own happiness on the foundation of some one's else misery.

And yet, Maxine knew that there was a duty which she

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owed to herself. She did not want to forego her innate right to a home and happiness with the man whom she loved. She did not believe she could ever love another, as she had and did love Richard Radcliffe. She became increasingly certain, from day to day, in spite of her absence from him, that her heart belonged to him.

There were times, even since she had been in France, when it had been necessary for her to summon, to her rescue, all the moral force of all the generations of all the Marlings, in order to withstand a mental surrender to the course of action which Richard Radcliffe had urged upon her, and which would have made him a free man. When such moments came to her, she always prayed for light and guidance, and acquitted herself with the grace of conduct and moral stamina, which she so sincerely advocated to others.

“Your message vibrates with so much sincerity that it is electrical in its effects,” was the comment which General Dimock had made to Maxine, when he had first heard her address the troops.

Brigadier-General Swanson had been so magnetized by her speech, and womanly behavior, that he wanted to know her better. Maxine had consented to dine with him, several times, but when he began to urge his attentions upon her, and pour out, effusively, the expressions of his enamored spirit, she declined to spend any more time with him.

She had resolved, that in any event, she would not compromise her soul, by marrying without love. Her reflections always carried her back to Richard, and she would ask herself the question: “Is it right for me to relinquish my birth-right to marriage and motherhood?”

In her service to others, she had come into a complete understanding of the joys of vicarious motherhood, but she

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feared that this would not satisfy her, for all time. Still, there was another way of looking at the matter. Once, after she had been deliberating on the subject, she had chanced to pick up a volume of Famous Orations, containing some of the finest examples of repartee in the English language. She read the story of one of the note-worthy retorts of John Randolph, the renowned United States Senator from Virginia. One of Randolph's political foes was striving to humiliate him by innuendo and made this statement: "There are certain hybrids, incapable of perpetuating their own species and I am informed that there are also some men —" Before Randolph's antagonist could finish his remarks, John Randolph arose to the Question of Personal Privilege and said: "I am aware that there are certain hybrids, incapable of perpetuating their own species and there may be some men — I do not know whether it is a virtue or a vice, but I thank God that I am not one of those men who wastes his time boasting of an accomplishment of which every dog is his equal and every jack-ass his superior."

Maxine smiled, as she read this clever bit of Senatorial wit, and then she reflected upon the lines: "I do not know whether it is a virtue or a vice."

"After all, it requires some degree of conceit and not a little egotism, to have the desire to perpetuate our earthly selves and to esteem ourselves worthy of perpetuation," she thought.

"It would hardly do, though, to express such a sentiment, in conventional society. It would be resented by those, whose greatest pride was constituted in their heirs," she cogitated.

She knew she would not want to see a son of her own endure the suffering and agony which had been the portion

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of many heroic sons of the war. And, yet if there were to be future wars, she would not want to feel that she had not done her part toward furnishing man-power to sustain and defend her own country; perpetuate its nationalism; and emblazon its standards on civilization. Then, too, with "the rising tide of color," she would want to do all in her power to assure the permanent Supremacy of the White Race. Thus she pondered, and, always, in these brown studies, her thoughts went back to Richard. She wondered what he would say about all the subjects of her meditations.

All her life, she had associated with many; she had fraternized with a few; she had affinitized, in spirit, with only one. Was there, any where in the world, another, who would respond to her soul-call as Richard Radcliffe had done? Maxine doubted it.

Still, of course, there had been instances, of which she had both read and heard, where a Great Love had laid hold of an inviolate soul; fed it with the energy of an ardent spirit; sustained it by the devotion of a loyal heart, and reassured it, by an untiring patience, worthy of a saint;—only to be supplanted, in the end, by a greater love, which soothingly nourished, and caressingly absorbed the object of its infinite passion.

In all of Maxine's experiences in France, she had been very mindful of conducting herself in such a manner, that there could be no jealousy of her favors. Thus she had maintained her popularity, and had not impaired the efficiency of her work. If she had been, for an instant, attracted to one young man, more than to another, she had always immediately dismissed the thought, and set resolutely about her tasks.

One night, when she had been sent to speak to the

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surviving members of the 101st and 102nd regiments, and the 362nd infantry, which had fought at Chateau-Thierry, she was detained for a moment, by a young, manly soldier, who wished to speak with her.

“Is it the bars and oak-leaves and eagles and stars which determine the degree of one’s patriotism, and the value of one’s services to his country; or is it that which is inside of the man,—the thing which he does practically lay to heart, concerning his duty and obligation to his country?” inquired the serious, blue-eyed, “buck” private.

“Don’t take it so seriously,” smilingly answered Maxine. “You know that Carlyle says: ‘But the thing a man does practically believe (and this is often enough without asserting it even to himself, much less to others); the thing a man does lay to heart, and know for certain, concerning his vital relations to this mysterious Universe and his duty and destiny here, that is in all cases the primary thing for him and creatively determines all the rest. That is his religion; or it may be his mere scepticism and no-religion: the manner it is in which he feels himself to be spiritually related to the Unseen World or No-World; and I say if you tell me what that is, you tell me to a very great extent what the man is, what the kind of thing he will do is.

“You asked me what it is which determines a man’s patriotism, and I have answered you in the words of Carlyle, because a man’s patriotism can never be divorced from his religion,” concluded Maxine.

The young soldier listened attentively. Maxine’s words had taken hold of him.

She continued: “You know the common expression ‘It’s a great life if you don’t weaken.’ Well, I prefer to omit the

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first 'e' in the word weaken, so that the epigram shall read: It's a great life if you don't waken!"

The nervous, tense expression of the private's face, softened into a smile, and then he laughed.

"I like your philosophy," he remarked. "It is very cheerful and wholesome. If you would not consider it presuming, on my part, I would like to have the privilege of talking with you, privately, sometime," he suggested.

"It's not at all presuming. If you can come around to the Hostess House, in about a half hour, I will be glad to see you," said Maxine.

"I'll be there," answered the "buck" private, and then he strolled leisurely away.

CHAPTER XIV

Henry Strong

HE WAS a Texan by birth and spirit; and Texanic he was in speech, manner and character; tall and angular, with firm, straight, black hair, deep blue-gray eyes; rather high cheek-bones, and prominent forehead.

There is an individuality to be remarked about these Lone Star Staters. They have breathed the air of a larger, more expanded freedom, than those who live in more thickly settled, densely populated regions. They are frank and natural. Without affectation,—they speak their minds freely, and have not, in their make-up, the unreliable elements, which sometimes characterize more urbane and sophisticated folks. Withal, they are human, and devoid, to a great degree, of the cynical attitude so apparent in many cosmopolitan characters.

“It is very good of you, Miss Marling, to permit me to come to have this little talk with you.

“When you began your talk to the boys, I was completely out of tune with the world, and only a mention of something about home, could have interested me. When you were talking about the great untapped resources of the United States, you spoke of the State of Texas,—Corpus

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Christi, and the land of pecans, bananas, and sweet potatoes. Then I listened.

“You see, I enlisted only six days after the United States entered the war. I was just starting on my second year of newspaper work on a Waco paper, — so, you see, I gave up a good position, that I might respond to the country’s call. It is true that the love of adventure counted somewhat in influencing me to make my decision, but for the most part, I was actuated by a desire to be among the first to volunteer service. I was rushed away to a Northern Camp, where I had only a few weeks’ training, before I was sent Over-Seas.

“Before I left home, I was informed by an influential friend of my family, that he would secure a commission for me, if I wanted him to do so. I was not friendly to the idea; in fact, I had made up my mind, that if I could not secure a commission and win promotion, on the basis of service, efficiency and an all-around meritorious record, that I would not be pushed forward on account of the influence, social standing, or prestige of my family.

“I was full of ‘pep,’ — just brimming over with energy and fervid patriotism, believing that if I did my whole duty, I would win recognition.

“You observe my present status. I have served under officers whose commands have nearly always been preceded, or accompanied by emphatic profanity. I have tried, again and again, for the officers’ training camp in France, but without success. I am beginning to believe that there must be something wrong with me, — almost losing confidence in myself. Perhaps I should not let my ambition to win recognition play such an important part, but in any event, my pride is wounded, and incidentally, to some degree, my self-respect,” concluded young Strong, while Maxine observed

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two service stripes and two wound stripes on the sleeves of the Texan's somewhat shabby and ill-fitting uniform.

"No, you haven't lost your self-respect. I shall have to take issue with you there. No man, who has done his best, can ever lose his self-respect. No matter whether or not you win promotion, the mental discipline which you are getting, and the association with all sorts and conditions of men, will serve you in good stead, later. Every experience is worth something, if we only make it so; and, we can always capitalize, to good advantage, every trial of our lives, if we will only hold out, — keep up our courage, and continue to be awake, and alive to our opportunities."

"I hope that is true," said young Strong, rather dejectedly, — while he felt his hopes rising within him, in spite of his mental depression. Then he continued: "As I told you, it has fallen to my lot, to serve under very coarse-grained officers, — but I would not mind that so much, if I believed that they played fair. My present Captain, before he entered the army, drove an ice-wagon in Alpena, Michigan. He seems to resent the fact that some of the boys in the company have had educational opportunities, which he has lacked; and so, he discriminates against all of us, who have had more schooling than he. He is a comparatively ignorant man, without even the elemental rudiments of learning, or refinements of life. He flies into a rage over the merest trifle, and without the least provocation, he hurls verbal barrages at us boys, which would make the ordinary sailor's vocabulary look like that fractional denomination of United States currency, vulgarly styled thirty cents.

"I am not whining. I am simply protesting, because I believe that American officership should stand for efficiency and democracy," said the soldier, emphatically.

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“Of course, it should. Your predicament is just one of those numerous, unfortunate, trying situations, not uncommon in the army, where a man of well-built, well-poised physique, — with a strong, mental equipment, which corresponds with his physical appearance, has been overlooked by the military authorities. There isn’t the least bit of reason for you to be down-hearted, — so just brace up and know that even if you never win a commission in the army, you will always be a bigger man and a better man, for having had this experience. Really, you know, you should pity the Captain, who is so puffed up, in his own conceit. Why, a cambric needle would burst him all to pieces. He reminds me of the story, which I heard an old officer of the Civil War tell, at Camp Upton, just before I left New York. It seems that he was made a Captain, when he was only nineteen, and when he returned home, after the war, the dear old Mayor of the town, arranged a reception in his honor. The Mayor made a speech, introducing the young officer to the audience, and among other fulsome and exaggerated introductory remarks, he said: ‘Imagine this young officer, marching in front of his men, — leading his troops into battle, and when the point of imminent danger was reached, he turned to his boys and shouted: “Come on! Come on!”’

“This old Civil War Captain went on to say: ‘Wasn’t it absurd? Didn’t the dear old Mayor of the town know that the first command which precedes a battle is “Officers to the rear!”’ And the higher up the rank of the officer, the farther to the rear he gets. Did he think that I would be so stupid as to march ahead of my men to be shot in front by the enemy, and in the back by my own men?’

“It was all very amusing to hear this old veteran tell his story, and there was much truth in what he said. What

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is your next move?" queried Maxine, of the young private.

"We go back into action tomorrow. I am going to try to believe that your optimistic view of life is well sustained by human experience, and that all you have said in your philosophizing with me, is true," answered Strong, indicating by the tone of his voice, that his spirits were taking on a color of hope and animation.

"I know that your ideals and faith in the final triumph of Justice will carry you through whatever test or trial you may be called upon to meet.

"I have headquarters, which I maintain permanently back in Paris at the Grand Hotel, where I go, occasionally, to rest for a week-end, and refresh my body and soul, from my work in the field.

"When you come out of the lines again, if you have any chance to get to Paris, please look me up, if no more than to tell me that you are in tune with the world once more, and that all is well with you. Never lose consciousness of the fact that you have within you, the resources and power to command life, until it is just as you would have it. Never let trying situations over-power you, or command you. It is within you to attain the mastery of circumstance, because you are bigger than any circumstance, which may encompass you. So long as you assert yourself, with all the strength and power of your being, you can not lose ground; — you will maintain your identity until you can express the best that there is in you, in all its fullness and power.

"A young man, of your character, can not lose out anywhere. I do want to hear from you and to see you again, — very much, indeed," exclaimed Maxine, with her usual sincerity and enthusiasm.

"I shall remember all that you have said. I shall surely

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see you again, if Heaven grants me safety and immunity from the dangers and ravages of battle," replied Strong, while he grasped Maxine's hand very closely.

"From this moment, I know that you will be safe. Hold the thought, tenaciously, that you are free from danger, and you will be triumphant, in the face of danger. Then, there is not anything in the world, which can harm you," said Maxine, while she looked confidently into the clear, grave eyes of the soldier.

"Good-night, and thank you. Whenever I am in danger, remember that I shall see your face,—your eyes, your smile, and I shall hear, over and over again, your words of encouragement and inspiration."

The Meuse-Argonne drive followed, and those were depressing, dreary days of rain and sleet; and mud and slime; but with enough action to quicken the hearts of the men. There were those who cursed the days when they were born. There were others who resigned themselves, passively, to their fate. There were many who welcomed action in preference to the monotonous inactivity of the training camps. There were some who felt that they were a part of a great, formidable, irresistible, conquering machine, which inevitably and forever, must put a stop to the Kaiser and Prussianism, and stem the tide of militarism.

It was just after the Battle of St. Mihiel, when Maxine had been sent to address some of the United States troops, who had participated in every important engagement, since July 21st. She had talked with Henry Strong on the evening of September 19th, just before his division left for the Argonne.

A few days later, toward the end of September, the

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regiment in which Strong was fighting, had driven the first line back on the second; both on the third; and the men were dying by the hundreds. The line never faltered. Over the dead and wounded; over the breast-works and fallen foe; over cannon, belching forth their fires; the Americans had led the way to victory.

Toward the end of the engagement, there was an order to retire, as replacements were coming up. Only a few days before, a new Lieutenant had assumed command of the section of the division, to which Henry Strong was attached. Altogether, the boys had pronounced Lieutenant Singleton the most human and the kindest of any officer who had had charge of them. When he knew that his men were exhausted, he interceded for an order which would enable them to retire until fresh troops could arrive, explaining to them that, after they had had time to recuperate, they would be called back.

Strong, with another American, named Sturgess, entered a shell-hole. They were awe-stricken, amazed, and then calmly self-controlled, when they found themselves face to face with a Hun, who had, evidently, been obliged to seek shelter, after he had been sent on a scouting or sniping expedition for the Germans. The Hun glanced fiercely at Strong. Not knowing what was in the German's mind, Strong's first impulse was to kill his foe, but as his eyes met those of the German, Strong discerned a look of fear and hatred, mingled with indecision. He decided to control the situation, if possible, without violence, — by keeping his eyes, concentratedly, on the Hun's movements. Then, if he detected anything which indicated that his foe was likely to turn antagonist, he would fire. But Sturgess, who was more impulsive than Strong, and fearing some quick, unexpected, fatal movement from the German, struck him, forcibly, be-

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tween the eyes, with the butt of his rifle. The blow proved fatal to the Hun. Strong and Sturgess, who had barely recovered from the eventful and exciting experiences of the past few days, breathed easily.

After the incident was over, Strong took occasion to rejoice, within himself, that it was not he who had delivered the blow, which ended the German's life. Killing enemies at a distance was one thing. Murdering them, as individuals, within easy reach, was another.

Within thirty-six hours, Strong and Sturgess, were ordered back into the lines, where they took part in another engagement, which lasted for more than ten hours of continuous firing, without relief. Finally, their unit was ordered to retire.

As the soldiers marched down the road, making their way here and there, over entanglements of barbed wire, as they crossed the fields, the men were talking with Lieutenant Singleton, who was known among them as a good fellow, and who, just before the last skirmish, had told the boys that he remembered the last words which his mother had spoken to him in Philadelphia, just before he left home.

“ ‘Whatever you do, be good to your men,’ she said to me. I hope that I have, at all times, acted upon her advice.”

To which the boys, within hearing distance, all shouted:

“Well, you have. You have certainly looked out for your men as has no other Lieutenant of whom we have heard.”

Just then, a stray shell, by the roadside, exploded, with tremendous force, and the young Lieutenant fell.

Immediately, his comrades rushed to his aid.

“Bring the stretcher,” said one.

Gasping for breath, Lieutenant Singleton exclaimed:

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“It will do no good! The Huns have finished me this time!”

And so they had. There were a few minutes of tense stillness, — then, a giving way, by a few of the boys, to the emotions which overpowered them; but there was no time for prolonged lamentations. Halting the procession, for a little time, by order of the Captain, one could hear such expressions as: “Yes, he was clean, and white, and straight, through and through. That was one officer, who played square. We won’t get another one like him. They don’t make them every day. Why does he have to be taken, when so many brutes are left in command?” And so on, the boys commented, one by one.

Two service stripes and one wound stripe were cut from Lieutenant Singleton’s sleeves, — letters taken from his pockets to be sent home, — and a funeral with full military honors, followed by the roadside near Romagne. With reverence, pity and tenderness, his ‘boys’ laid him away, in a secluded spot. All the attention to such little details as banking up the grave, marking the spot and placing a flag over it, was paid to the memory of Lieutenant Singleton. Then, a final salute was given, and the soldiers marched on.

Private Strong had been close enough to Lieutenant Singleton to get the bounding reaction of the shell explosion. Strong was removed to the nearest hospital. Complicating the evil effects resulting from this accident, were the weaknesses which had attacked Strong, after his last confinement in the hospital, following the Chateau Thierry drive.

As he lay on his cot, making very hard work of relaxing himself, according to the orders of the Red Cross Nurse, who attended him, he thought of Maxine Marling. Her words went through his mind, over and over again. He could hear her saying:

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“I know that your ideals and faith in the final triumph of Justice will carry you through whatever test or trial you may be called upon to meet. . . . Never lose consciousness of the fact that you have, within you, the resources and power to command life . . . until it is just as you would have it. Never let trying situations command you. . . . You are bigger than circumstances, therefore, master them. . . . A young man of your character can not lose out anywhere.”

When the pain, which he felt, was so intense that his reason almost gave way, the thought came to him, — the last thought which Maxine had expressed: “I know that you will be safe. Hold the thought that you are free from danger, and you will rise above danger.”

Then he pondered over the gravest questions of life. What was the soul? What was life? Was it electricity, and when, for some reason, the current was broken, or the circuit interrupted, did it rest for only a brief period, until the wires could be connected, elsewhere, again?

Strong remembered that his mother had told him, from his earliest school days, that the Kingdom of God was within himself. He had never realized so fully all that this meant, until he had talked with Maxine Marling, and she had aroused him, and inspired him so vigorously, as to the possibilities within himself. He would assert himself, just as she had told him to do. He would not succumb to this evil thing known as death. Did most people die because they suffered so much, either mentally or physically, that they lost the desire to live, and so, at last, gave up voluntarily, thus resigning themselves to the fate of being withdrawn from circulation?

No, he would not release himself to the domination of this influence known as pain. He would deliver himself from it.

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He would reflect many times more on the message which Maxine had so helpfully brought to him. He could see her face. He could hear her voice. He could feel the strength of her words. He could drown himself in a reverie of her charms. He could dwell, at length, upon the grave realities of life to be culminated by the triumph of the spirit, over all that was sordid and commonplace and evil.

“She is a very remarkable woman. I must live to see her again. I will live to see her,” he thought to himself, while he moaned, occasionally, over the distress, which his internal tortures caused him.

Several weeks went by. Strong began to improve. He felt within that he was almost himself once more. He was just about to be released to go back to duty. He contemplated this with much satisfaction. Action, any sort of action, was preferable to this deadly dullness. He would fight with renewed valor and courage. He was stronger than he had ever been, — at least, he believed he was. He recalled the lines of Sir Galahad:

“My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.”

He was already for anything that might happen. He would give the best that there was in him to the glory of his Country. He would reflect credit upon his mother and the other members of his family. He was full of vim and hope; determination and resolution. He would conquer. He would achieve. He might, possibly, get to be an officer yet.

Just as he was meditating upon all that was before him, the nurse came into the room. There was an expression of peace and satisfaction and joy upon her countenance.

“I have the most wonderful news for you! The most joyful news! The Armistice has been signed! I heard several

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days ago that this was going to happen, but I did not mention it to you, for fear of building up false hopes, in the event that the rumor was not well substantiated. Now you are free. You have no more turmoil and bloodshed to look forward to. You don't look as happy about it as I thought you would," concluded the sweet-faced, middle-aged lady.

"No. I don't know whether to be sorry or glad. Some way I feel that my career, as a soldier, has been cut short, before I had either the time, or the opportunity, to really 'make good' in the service of my Country. I had hoped to do bigger things; better things; nobler things," said Strong, thoughtfully.

"I don't believe that you have any reason to regret that you haven't done the very noblest things possible. I want you to tell me what it is that you keep in that little box, which you hide so carefully under your pillow every night," she insisted.

Strong's face flushed. It grew redder and redder. Then he composed himself, and said: "Why, that is, — that is, — well, I will get it and show it to you."

He walked over to his knapsack and drew forth the mysterious box. "Open it and see for yourself," he said.

"Since you have urged me, I will do so," remarked the nurse, while she raised the cover.

"Well, of all things!" she exclaimed. "If it isn't a Distinguished Service Cross, and you never even told me." Then she read the citation which had been carefully kept in the same box. "Awarded to Henry Strong by the Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces for having gone beyond the call of Duty on an Expedition to repel and entrap a band of German snipers, who were slain by himself."

"That is wonderful; but I surmised, from the very begin-

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ning, that you had done some big thing, because you have such unconquerable faith and infinite modesty," commented the nurse.

"Well, I don't like to talk about myself. But do you know what they are going to do with me now, since they can't send me back to fight?" queried Strong, rather anxiously.

"Yes, you are to be sent to Paris, because the Major, who has been your physician, insists that you must be where the most skilful American physicians can be consulted, until you are completely recovered, which, we think, will not be long," she said, cheerfully, before she left the room, to bring young Strong his supper.

"So, I'm going to Paris! I remember well, when the Germans were bombarding Paris from Clayé. I was fortunate in being where I could help, in my small way, to repel that advance.

"Paris! Well, that's good! I shall see her there; my Dream Woman, — my dreams of her have sustained my fighting strength and courage, ever since I left her. She represents my ideal of all that is best, and truest, and noblest, in womanhood.

"No wonder that it is easy for her to carry her own burdens in life, because she bears so many burdens for others; that this gives her strength to carry her own.

"She is a thoroughbred, all right. It has been well said that the cart horse goes until he can't go another inch, and then gives up; that the thoroughbred goes until he can't go another inch, — and then goes the other inch.

"She reminds me of something which I have read about Lincoln, when he said, that he wanted it said of him, by those who knew him best, that he always plucked a thistle and planted a flower, wherever he thought a flower would grow.

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“Well, I shall see her soon, and I know that we shall have much to talk about,” Strong soliloquized, just as the nurse returned to the room, with his broth, hard bread, and dish of “gold fish.”

CHAPTER XV

Getting Better Acquainted

“SO, YOU’VE had a lot of trouble finding me. Well, that’s too bad. They never gave me your message. How are you anyway?” Maxine inquired of Private Strong, just as they had seated themselves in the reading room of the Grand Hotel, on the Boulevard des Capucines.

“I’m just fine, and it’s certainly a pleasure to see you again. After we have had a little chat, I want you to go to dinner with me,” suggested Strong.

They went on talking for a few minutes, about some of the most exciting things, which had occurred, since that night when they first met, up in the Marne sector.

“Let’s dine here,” said Strong. “This looks like a real, honest-to-God civilized place,” he exclaimed.

“I would as lief go to the Saint Denis Canteen,” said Maxine, — not knowing anything about Private Strong’s financial resources.

“No,” remonstrated Strong. “I’ve grown a little tired of ‘gold fish’ and army-chow, as well as canteen cookery; and I prefer to go into a real restaurant, such as I imagine they must have here. I’ve heard my father tell about this place. He came here once, many years ago.

“Ye gods! This is the best place I’ve struck, since I left home,” ejaculated Strong.

They walked through the Palm Garden, where a French

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and Italian orchestra was giving one of its first programs, since the Armistice.

“Speaking of your army ‘gold fish,’ — your salmon, — reminds me of a story of the far western country,” said Maxine.

Then she related to him the story, which Richard Radcliffe had told her when she had first met him, on the occasion of the Worthington-Hargreaves’ dinner.

“I have found a great many men, who remind me of this ‘Salmon-Sturgeon Story.’ Some of them, who are sturgeon in America, are Captains, Majors and Colonels in France; salmon over here, and sturgeon at home. I have also found a considerable number of men, who are salmon in America and sturgeon in France. They are among our finest men back home, but over here, they are privates in the United States Army,” she added.

“Your reference, to many of the American officers in France, reminds me of the ‘buck’ private who said: ‘Wait until that Captain gets out of his O. Ds. (olive drab uniform), — what I won’t do to him!’

“‘No, you won’t, sir. You’ll stand in line and take your turn with the rest of us,’ said the Sergeant, emphatically.”

Seated comfortably in the main dining-room, to the left of the dais, and above the Palm Garden of the Grand Hotel, Strong said:

“What are you going to have for dinner? This is your dinner, you know.”

“Suppose we start with Potagé Saint Germain, followed by Filet de Sole Grand,” suggested Maxine.

“All right, that suits me. I am prepared to do full justice to a big dinner; and while I feel like ordering everything on the menu, I am restrained by the fact that I have

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an American woman with me, so that I shall not indulge myself to the extent of a starved soldier's rapacious capacity, — because I do not want either to disgrace, or to shock you.

“In fact, when I look at you, I believe that I could even do without any dinner at all. Just to have the privilege of talking to you, and dining with you, would be a sufficient feast for me, at any time, so I shall leave it to you to determine what the waiter shall bring us.”

“Let's look at the menu again. Do you speak French?” she inquired.

“Yes, in a way, I do. Let's order some pommes and dinde. That's turkey, isn't it?”

“Yes, and I am going to have some artichauts, and later on, some apricots. Suppose we finish with raisins. That, of course, you know, means grapes over here.”

“Very good. The mention of all those dishes falls softly upon my ears,” remarked Strong.

When the dinner was well under way, Maxine said:

“I call this a pretty good feast.”

“Now, you make me think of a picture on the funny page of a New York newspaper, which was recently sent to me. I don't mean that you personally, remind me of the picture, at all. Of course not,” said Strong, laughingly; “but when you said that this was a pretty good dinner, it brought this picture back to my mind.

“Mr. Givney said to little Jerry, ‘If you bought six tickets to New Monia, at four dollars apiece, how much would they cost?’

“‘Why, twenty-four dollars, of course,’ answered Jerry.

“‘Pretty good,’ said Mr. Givney.

“‘Pretty good, your eye! It's perfect,’ said Jerry, in-

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dignantly. And so, that is what I say about this dinner. It's perfect," concluded Strong.

"Yes, that's a point very well taken. I've always read the funny page, but I've seldom seen one, since I came to France," replied Maxine.

The conversation turned to the prospective arrival of the representatives to the Paris Peace Conference. This was the evening following the announcement of President Wilson's plan to represent the United States, at the Peace table.

"The President, no doubt, believes that he can best secure the things the boys fought for, by coming to Paris, himself; but, if a youth of my limited experience is entitled to express his opinion, on so grave a matter, I must say, that I am a little apprehensive, as to the wisdom of his coming," commented Private Strong, who had been a keen student of politics, from his boyhood, and whose newspaper experience had stimulated his natural aptitude for diplomatic affairs.

"Yes," responded Maxine, "these European diplomats are so schooled in the game of International Politics, that they play it with all the astuteness and adroitness of an expert at bridge; and once an amateur, who has lived three thousand miles from the center of International Diplomacy, comes into their midst, they will be quick to take advantage of his lack of experience in the tactics, strategy, and finesse of Treaty-Making Diplomacy."

"Yes, if he were to remain back in Washington, he could deliberate more, before making important decisions. Then, he could express himself, through his representatives, here in Paris. Hence, he would place himself in a position so secure, that if anything went wrong, he could put the responsibility on his spokesmen here.

"On the other hand, if matters went well, he could, him-

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self, take the credit. The European Statesmen, who will be in the Conference, will have the advantage of close access to their advisers and parliaments, and will be in a position to know what kind of a Treaty will be most acceptable to their constituents," remarked Strong, who had vivid memories of all that he had read of Count Witte, Metternich, Tallyrand, Gladstone, Disraeli, Washington, Lincoln, and a score of other diplomats and statesmen.

"It will require a long time before we two million privates in France, will know to what degree we have made the 'world safe for Democracy.' When history shall reveal to us, clearly, the final consequences of this war, I shall regret none of the hardships, or sacrifices, incidental to army life, if it shall be proven that we have made any permanent contribution to the advancement of Democracy."

"Yes, I see that you feel much better, about everything in general, and war in particular, than you did, when I last saw you," exclaimed Maxine, rather delightedly.

"Indeed, I do; and it was your sympathetic interest, spirit of cheerfulness, and clear understanding, more than anything else, which brought me through those trying days in the Argonne. You will never know what it all meant to me," replied Strong, appreciatively.

When they left the dining-room, Strong suggested, that they might take a walk, through the Place la Concorde and the Rue Castiglione to the Rue de Rivoli. It was a quiet night. Paris seemed pleasingly restful. The intense and erratic excitement, which filled the streets, directly after the Armistice, had subsided. There were only a few people crossing the Place la Concorde. The Rue de Rivoli was brighter than it had been since 1914. It was not yet gay or frolicsome, but it was passively, if not exuberantly, happy. The lights were

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radiant, but not brilliant. There were many French soldiers strolling along, leisurely, with their mademoiselles. There was a scattering of British and Polish soldiers,—a few Italians, and a goodly number of Americans. Some of the evening strollers walked through the Tuilleries Garden. Occasionally, a monk, with a proud, dignified gait, made his way in front of the park benches, while he cast the most reproving glances toward the soldiers and their sweethearts, who had settled down, comfortably, for a peaceful, uninterrupted chat.

The only light which shone far above the others, was that of a glittering, electrical device, fancifully contrived for dramatic effect. It was used as a heraldic, overlooking the Seine, and bore this inscription:

“Welcome to Wilson, the Just!” The display was in largely illuminated letters.

“Of course, you remember,” said Strong, “the story in Greek History, of Aristeides, the Just, the most popular man in the Ecclesia of Athens. One day, when he was a candidate for re-election, a Greek citizen exclaimed: ‘I shall not vote for him this time, although prior to this, I have always done so.’

“ ‘Why not?’ queried his companion.

“ ‘Because,’ said the Greek, ‘I am tired of hearing him called Aristeides, the Just.’ ”

Maxine listened intently. It seemed to her so extraordinary, that so young a man should have such clear vision, in regard to such weighty matters of State.

“Such ovational tributes of welcome presage, I fear, disaster;—since it is not possible for any one, who is human, to measure up to the ideal, which the European people imagine Wilson to represent,” concluded Strong.

“You have most unusual, political acumen. I have never

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observed it, to such a degree, in any other young man. You must have spent your time rather studiously, and I should judge, wisely," commented Maxine, who was becoming keenly interested in Private Strong's political forecasts.

"What background have you had for political observation?" she inquired.

"Very little, in practice; a great deal in theory. My paternal grandfather was a New England manufacturer, who, for his day, made a fortune. But, in his later years, he guaranteed financial obligations for a friend, who met with misfortunes. This consumed much of his wealth; and my father took the few thousand dollars, which my grandfather left him, and went to Texas, where he accumulated considerable means in merchandising, and exporting peanuts. Later, he became interested in oil, and things worked out well for him.

"When I was no more than eight years old, I can remember of lying on the floor, in front of the fire-place, in the big reception room of my father's wholesale house, and hearing him talk to the salesmen and commercial travellers, about the politics of the time. I recall that he used to discourse upon public policies, both local and national.

"He told me that my New England ancestors, had, many of them, held office; that he had, himself, been attracted to a political career, but that he had been too busy, making money, to retrieve the family's fortunes, to enable him to give any time to serving in office, but that it was his hope, that when I grew up, I would aspire to public service.

"My mother was a descendant of the Virginia Cavaliers, — her father having pioneered in Texas, and her ambition for me, since my father's death, when I was only ten years of

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age, has always been similar to that which my father entertained for me.

“I hope, some day, to be qualified to render a greater service to my country than it has yet been possible for me to do, — especially, in the United States Army; — but the fact, that I, both entered the army, and came out of it as a private, will, I believe, as you once told me: ‘Serve me in good stead.’ I hope, too, that my army experience will not only prove of practical benefit, in the development of my own career, but that it will enlarge my capacity for usefulness to my fellow-men. I trust that it may be the means of pointing the way for me to serve humanity well.

“I was graduated two years before I entered the army, from the University of Texas, and I spent the two years, following my college course, in newspaper work, — the first year, in a very small town, called Strongsville, which was named for my father, and the second year, as I told you, I worked on the largest daily paper in Waco. Six months of this time, I was a reporter on this journal, and the other six months, I was assistant to the Managing Editor. I hope, some day, to get somewhere, as a representative journalist,” concluded Strong, in a determined manner.

“You have an admirable preparation and practical foundation for a journalistic career, which might lead to circumstances favorable to the realization of your political aspirations,” suggested Maxine, in a tone of enthusiasm.

“Yes, I have a real desire to make good in the world, and to strengthen the cause of the common man, but I do not wish to make him, either too contented, or too discontented, with his lot, — but rather, I should like to see an enlargement of his powers of appreciation, coupled with an eager desire to

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use all his opportunities, for the most constructive self-improvement.

“It requires so much contributed life, to make a fine lady or a fine gentleman, that I believe, that all those who lay claim to such a title, should declare moral, intellectual and spiritual dividends, on the investment of time, energy, and money, which is tied up in them. I believe that the average man should not be required to spend so much time in a struggle for the bare necessities of existence, and that there should be every incentive, offered by society, to induce him to spend his leisure in developing himself to become an efficient part of our national life;—to the end that our physical, mental and spiritual freedom may assert and express itself, in a well-defined policy of nationalism, which shall mean an uninterrupted continuity of national life, and the supremacy of American standards in international relationships, which shall enable the United States to lead the world in trade, industry, commerce and creative thought.

“I want to see our laboring men and women just as responsive to responsibility, as any other class of citizens. I want private enterprise to make its stewardship more vigilantly responsive to public welfare, so that it shall, at all times, become the servant of all the people, and not of any particular class,—so that it shall serve, without discrimination, in conferring its favors and benefits.”

“Very well said. You have the right kind of enthusiasm, and you know that there isn’t anything in the world so contagious as enthusiasm, except, of course, the lack of it.

“Your educational training,—zeal for the common good,—coupled with your boundless energy, should make a way for you to enter public life, and help to bring into expression the

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splendid ideals which you cherish," Maxine commented, with her usual earnestness.

"Not forgetting my army experience again, which I hope will broaden my interests and sympathies, wherever I find myself," replied Strong.

They were back at the Boulevard des Capucines, when Maxine remarked:

"This has been one of the best evenings which I have had since I came to France."

"The very best which I have had, since I joined the army," promptly answered Strong, "and I hope to be able to repeat it occasionally, if it will not be presuming too much upon your leisure and good-nature."

"Indeed, it will not be. As soon as things are reorganized, I must go back to the huts in the field, because the boys will need diversion and entertainment now, more than ever.

"In the meantime, come to see me often. I shall continue to keep my headquarters at the Grand Hotel," said Maxine, as Private Strong bade her good-night, in the lobby of that famous hostelry,—where the Kaiser had so confidently planned to take up his residence,—within such easy reach of the Opera and the Parisienne resorts of mirth, surrounding himself with every luxury, and indulging himself in costly gratifications of all his selfish desires.

CHAPTER XVI

A Mental Recreator and Ambition Accelerator

“**A**T LAST, I seem to have commended myself to an officer of the United States Army. I have a new Captain, now. He has assigned me to the Courier service, — in fact, he has given me a place as chief clerk. That means that I must supervise all the official mail, which comes to Paris, and that I must be responsible for the proper routing of the mail, to all European and Asiatic countries. As soon as the Peace Conference is assembled, my duties will involve the dispatch of the mail sent from there. It is really very necessary that the most practical and expeditious routes shall be used for all the important mail, in order that time may be saved, and the efficiency of the service maintained. Captain Dill is organizing a staff of the most trustworthy messengers, who shall carry, personally, all important documents to the dignitaries and notable attachés of that distinguished body.”

With this piece of news, Private Strong opened the conversation, which took place between him and Maxine, a few days after their last meeting.

“I see that you have a new spic-and-span uniform, too. I like that figure of the greyhound on the dark, blue background, against the khaki. That’s the insignia of the Couriers, isn’t it? It’s very attractive,” replied Maxine, animatedly.

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“Yes, it does very well, in the absence of bars and oak-leaves and eagles and so on. The work is a change, anyway, and I think that it will prove to be rather interesting, because the Courier service covers the five continents. I might, possibly, manage to get all the way around the world, just as a Courier in the army. Anyway, I might be fortunate enough to get part way around,” said Strong.

“It would be a wonderful opportunity, wouldn’t it? But I don’t like to think of losing you so soon, now that we have become such good friends,” responded Maxine.

“And I wouldn’t like to think of going, either. Oh! probably I won’t go. Since I’ve met you, I haven’t even been to see my French girl. Of course, she doesn’t appeal to me in at all the same way, or interest me, as you do.

“You have seemed to understand my purposes and aspirations, from the very first. You have had a breadth of contact, which bespeaks very cosmopolitan associations, and which has given you a fund of information, a culture, and an understanding of life, which is a big advantage. It has given you the right kind of self-confidence.

“My experience as a ‘buck’ private had a tendency to take away much of my self-confidence; but I am going to try to win it back again, insofar as my capabilities will justify.”

“Yes, I really believe that you should cultivate more assurance, because you have the foundation of education and character, which would warrant a determination, on your part, to achieve for yourself, any place in the world, in keeping with your aspirations. This is a day and age, when young men have the opportunity, both to start things and to finish them. One does not have to stand back for old-timers, nowadays. The way is open for youth and energy.

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“Well, to change the subject; how do you like this apartment? Don’t you think I was rather sensible to give up my suite of rooms in the Grand and lease this place, for a change?”

“Yes, I believe that you will get more satisfaction out of it, and I see, too, that you have a very chic and smart French maid. Whenever you come back to Paris from the field, she will be able to have things in readiness for your comfort and enjoyment, while you are here.”

“Yes, I think that she will take very good care of me. Her name is Fanchette. She is a very vivacious, emotional, little French girl, who lost the soldier boy, to whom she was engaged,—in the Marne salient, last July. She has an American soldier, who is her sweetheart right now,—a rather crude, country boy, who lives on a farm, somewhere back in the hills of Tennessee. She asked me this morning when I was going back to America, and when I told her ‘not for many months yet,’ she said that by that time, she might be able to accompany me,—that is, if she and her soldier boy continued to be lovers.

“Of course, I couldn’t take her home with me, any-way, because I have a woman who keeps house for me, who has been just like a member of our family, ever since my childhood.

“Fanchette is, apparently, very devoted to me. She acts as my personal maid, as well as serving as cook and housekeeper.

“I am trying to teach her to cook more as Mary Ann, my housekeeper in New York does.”

“In addition to all your other accomplishments, you can cook, can you? I thought, from the very first, that you were a

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wonderful woman, and now, I know it," said Strong, with emphasis.

"Well, I'll take the chance of inviting you to stay for dinner, so that you can decide for yourself, whether I can really cook. You must remember, though, that cooking is only my avocation,—just a subordinate occupation,—so, don't expect too much," warningly suggested Maxine.

"Anything which you are willing to do, is a safe bet with me!" ejaculated Strong.

Within an hour, they sat down to a feast fit for kings. There was a shrimp cocktail, fried chicken, mashed potatoes, "piping" hot, with "beaucoup" butter, as Fanchette said. There was a mince pie, made of genuine American mince-meat, brought from the U. S. A. commissary. Maxine, herself, had made the pie, which proved to be a delicious concoction of well-known, Yankee mixtures. This dessert was followed by grapes, English walnut meats, and Riviera dates, stuffed with pecan meats. A large cup of coffee, sweetened with real American, lump sugar, also supplied from the commissary, completed the menu.

"When you invited me to dinner, you said that you were willing to take the chance. So far as I can see, the only chance which a man takes who eats this dinner, is that of losing his life by over-eating. I haven't sat down to a spread like this, since I left my home, back in Strongsville, Texas.

"Any woman, who can prepare such a dinner as this, ought to have a Distinguished Service Cross. I want you to know that, if it were in my power, I would award you a medal, and I would place upon your head, the highest and most exalted honors, which can be bestowed upon woman-kind. All that I can say now, however, is 'I thank you, from the bottom of my heart, and the depths of my soul, and more

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than this, I congratulate you on your ability and art as a cook',” said Strong, in tones of praise and appreciation.

“Your interesting conversation, and all-around sociability, constitute sufficient reward, for any effort which I may have put forth to entertain you.

“I am not going to invite many people to dine with me, or spend very much time entertaining in this apartment, — only just a few, in whom I happen to be personally interested, because, as you say, I need the rest and relaxation whenever I come to Paris.

“There are a few very well-known Americans, whom I have met in war work, and after the Peace Conference is established, and the winter season sets in, I shall meet a good many people at the American Embassy, but I am not going to permit myself to spend too much time at social functions, or in activities which will divert my energies from my work in the field. I like to go out once in awhile, but I am not a lover of society.

“However, if you want to select a few of your friends, among the private soldiers, who do not have many of the right kind of social opportunities, you will be perfectly welcome to invite them here to my apartment to spend an evening, any time that you like. It will not make any difference whether I am here or not. Whenever I am in the field, I want you to feel perfectly free to bring your friends in. You can play cards, and other games, and have a little music. The piano over there was rented to me with this apartment. Whenever I am at home, and you bring any private soldiers in with you, I will manage to have a salad, some fruit, sandwiches and coffee. When I am not at home, you can bring in your own supper, and have whatever you like. Most of the time, Fanchette, will go with me to the field; at other

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times, she will go home to her mother; and some of the time, she will be here."

"You have given me a new idea of the meaning of the word hospitality. I thought, before I knew you, that we Southerners had a special brand of hospitality all our own, but since I have met you, I am inclined to think that we over-rate, in our own minds, the kind and generous reception and entertainment, which we provide for strangers or guests," complimentingly responded Strong.

"Henry, — I am going to call you Henry from now on, I know that some day, you will make your mark in the world, and then it will make me very proud and happy, to look back upon the time when I first knew you, — when you were getting your bearings on the world, and establishing your philosophy of life. If I can be the least bit of help, or inspiration to you, I want to bring to myself the pleasure of encouraging you, as well as the honor which will come to me, in later years, when I can claim you as one of my best friends of long standing." There was such a deep ring of sincerity in all that Maxine had said, that it stimulated Henry Strong's sensitive sense of gratitude. As soon as he could collect himself, he replied:

"You have not only stimulated my ambition, but your conversation has been both a diversion and an inspiration to me. You are a mental recreator and ambition accelerator, and that's some combination, I'll say. In fact, I believe that every woman should have just these elements in her make-up, and I believe that she succeeds in retaining the friendship, and holding the heart interest of men, in direct proportion to her ability to entertain them, and her power to inspire them."

"I hope that is true. It ought to be true, — that is, if it

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is true that women were actually created to be the help-mates of men, as I believe that they were.

“I have been reading a great deal of late, and I believe that I have slightly strained one of my eyes. I am going to prepare a little solution of witch-hazel and bathe both my eyes in it.”

Maxine excused herself for a moment, after which she returned to the fire-place in the living-room, to heat the concoction, which she had prepared, — that she might apply it, while it was warm. She saturated, with the liquid, a dainty, white, silk handkerchief. Just as she was about to apply the soothing balm, Henry suggested, in a tone of reserve, tinged with timidity:

“Perhaps I can be of some assistance. Excuse me while I wash my hands, and then let me hold your eye open, while you pour in the witch-hazel.”

Henry performed this delicate service, with dexterous skill, and much tenderness.

Maxine was aware, momentarily, that there was a magnetic charm, both pure and refined, about the young man's touch, which was characterized by becoming delicacy. She could not deny, to herself, for the instant, that this had made a slight appeal to her own well-controlled, but spontaneous and emotional nature.

“Does your eye feel better?” inquired Henry, anxiously.

“Yes, indeed. It hasn't really felt badly at all, — only I realized that I had been over-taxing my eye-sight of late, and I want, very much, to keep my eyes in good condition. I had a one hundred per cent report from the oculist, when I entered the army.”

“No wonder. They could have given you that, without making any examination. If the eyes are the windows of the

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soul, then your soul is a dwelling of peace and contentment and righteous living. Its depths are like those of the deepest, bluest sea, and its boundaries are as infinite as the space of the universe, — its sympathies as limitless as the expansive canopy of the sky, and its power for good as immeasurable as divinity itself,” said Henry, without apparent consciousness of the beauty expressed in his extemporaneous utterance.

“Now, I am sure that you are qualified to be a writer, after a speech like that,” laughingly remarked Maxine.

“No, it would not require any extraordinary ability, on the part of any man of average intelligence, to make a speech even better than that, while looking into your eyes. You’ve heard the song, haven’t you ‘She’ll Tell You What You’re To Do, Dear, If You But Look In Her Eyes?’ ”

“Yes, I have,” replied Maxine, with coyness. Then she quickly changed the subject, by saying: “Fanchette is coming along, splendidly, with her Tennessean. I just saw him going around to the side door. Excuse me just a moment, while I go to tell her to give him a good supper.”

When Maxine came back to the living-room, she went on:

“I think you are to be congratulated on your admirable self-control, in successfully resisting the charms of these very attractive, almost irresistible, French girls.”

“Not at all; — not when I have the choice of your society. On the other hand, I think that you, yourself, must have maintained an almost adamant attitude, toward all the officers, who must have tried to make love to you,” asserted Henry.

“My relations with the officers, whom it has been necessary for me to meet, have been quite agreeable; — but I gave them to understand, all the time, that I came here with no other purpose than to spend my time in helping to entertain,

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and to build up the hopes and courage of the men in the ranks," answered Maxine.

"Well, I know that you will agree with me, that a great confusion of social standards, among men and women, has accompanied and will follow this war. There have been, necessarily, many unconventional relationships between men and women. For instance, our own acquaintance would, perhaps, not have continued on the same basis, under normal conditions. Every man in the army, and every American woman, who has come to France, has had to face a chaotic, unparalleled combination of circumstances. I dare say, that you, yourself, with all of your natural poise, have been obliged, on many occasions, over here, to erect a personal barricade to defend yourself from the presuming, unwarranted advances of many of the officers, — while, no doubt, back home, a mere conventional signal would have sufficed in repelling the forward steps of any undesirable admirers or suitors," said Henry, indicating, rather pointedly, that he was somewhat curious, as to the methods which Maxine had employed, which had enabled her to resist, so cleverly, the over-confident, over-decorated officers, who were the subjects of so much envy, from the men who lacked their insignia.

"Yes, I have had some such experiences, as those to which you refer," admitted Maxine.

"I can easily understand it, because no woman, of your charm and personality, could possibly have escaped such experiences," commented Henry, while he still wondered, as to the secret of Maxine's ability to manage men and to keep their good-will, at the same time.

"Thus far, I have been able to keep my somewhat sympathetic nature perfectly impervious to, and my heart im-

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mune from all the attractions and inducements of those in the A. E. F., who wear the official insignia."

"That surprises me, in one way, and pleases me in another. I need not say that I have been exceedingly flattered, by your willingness to spend so much of your precious time with me, when I have known, all along, that dozens of the American officers were, as the boys say, 'falling all over themselves' to get a chance to talk to you, or an opportunity to spend an evening with you."

"I prefer to choose my men friends, on the basis of mutual interest, congeniality and capacity for comradeship. I have not been at all dazzled, or unduly impressed by the glamour of the shoulder insignia, with which I have been surrounded. In fact, one of the Brigadier-Generals, with whom I went to the theatre one evening, continued his attentions to me, until he made himself almost obnoxious. He spoiled, what might have been, a delightful friendship, by trying to make love to me. He mistook my cordiality for a real personal interest in him; and I had to make some very pointed remarks to him, before he understood my attitude," explained Maxine.

"I appreciate the embarrassment of the situation, in which you must have found yourself, but, at the same time, I am prepared to make some allowances for the conduct of the Brigadier-General.

"You know there are a great many American women over here, who do not maintain the same standards of conduct, under the strain of war and the events following it, as they did maintain before they came to France, or will continue to follow after they will have returned home.

"But, in any event, to revert to the incident to which you have just referred, I can appreciate the temptations of

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the Brigadier-General, when he was favored by the privilege of spending any time in your enchanting presence.

“Perhaps, he took it for granted, as some of the officers do, that our American women, under these conditions, over here, will permit more liberties than they are inclined to do at home. He may have even thought, in his mighty, official conceit, that he could really make love to you and that you would take him seriously,” suggested Henry.

“Well, if he did, he certainly experienced a very humiliating disappointment. It is true that some of the women have been rather thoughtless, and a little careless, about their conduct, over here. For the most part, however, I think that they have acquitted themselves with grace and splendid records for service,” said Maxine, with her usual spirit of fairness.

“Yes, I think that is true,” remarked Henry; “but, of course, the more attractive they are, the more temptations they must experience. For instance, you, yourself, would be bound to be the center of much interest, — much more so, than those of lesser charm, or fewer accomplishments.”

“You flatter me,” said Maxine, smilingly.

“No, indeed. My powers of speech would not enable me to do that; — because I think so much nicer and better things of you, than I am ever able to say.”

“I can only indulge myself in the hope, then that I shall always retain your good opinion,” responded Maxine.

“All of which is, of course, a foregone conclusion,” replied Henry.

Whenever Maxine came back to Paris, during the next few weeks, she always arranged to give considerable of her time to Henry. They had Thanksgiving dinner at the Grand Vatel in the Rue St. Honore, when Maxine was Henry’s

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guest. When Christmas came, Maxine gave a dinner party to ten American privates; Henry, five of his friends, and four other boys, whom she had met in different sectors, during her field work, — all of whom had been sent to Paris to Clignancourt, — directly after the Armistice.

Merriment and joyousness reigned supremely on this jovial occasion. It is doubtful whether there were anywhere in the whole, wide world, ten happier boys, than were Maxine's guests. She presented them each with a box, containing stuffed dates, cakes, grapes and oranges, which they took back to their barracks, as a happy reminder of this mirthful Christmas.

“This is some experience, I'll say, for a lot of us fellows, who have been living on ‘slum gullion,’ dried apples and ‘gold fish,’ and who haven't seen the inside of a real home, since we left the States. I'll get a lot of ‘kick’ out of writing home about this,” ejaculated Private Pete Zellers, from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, who received, up to the time that he became wounded at Chateau Thierry, thirty-three dollars a month. Then he was sent to the hospital, and when he was discharged from Base 57, was obliged to assume the status of a casual, because he had been detached from his own regiment for more than two weeks. He hadn't received any pay since he was wounded, so that his finances were in a bad way. In fact, when he had been receiving his money regularly, he had always sent ten dollars a month, back to his mother. Ever since Henry had met Private Pete, he had always taken an interest in him. At this very time, he was ‘coaching’ Pete in English, so that the latter might secure a removal of a condition, which would enable him to enter Beaune University. Besides, Henry had helped this “Buddy” out a number of times, by passing over a few franc notes to him.

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“This is a ‘swell’ place,” volunteered Private Eugene Austin, of Bay City, Michigan,—when he had once overcome the reserve and self-consciousness, which had caused all his emotions to congeal, when he had first entered Maxine’s unique and interesting apartment.

And well he might have commented on this artistic and completely equipped domicile. Maxine had rented it from a Russian Princess, whose estates had been confiscated by the Bolsheviki, and whose income had been so diminished by the recent demoralizing events in her own country, that she had been obliged to seek cheaper residential quarters.

This temporary residence of Maxine was delightfully located on the Champs Elysees. The entrance to the apartment house was quite commonplace. The double, bolted, metal doors were opened by a rather unkempt concierge. The vestibule was more enticing than the entrance. It was of white marble, with the finest, plate glass mirrors, set in along the hall-way, equi-distant from the floor and the ceiling. The lights were of soft blue, indirectly emitted from above. There was a fountain lined with sea-blue, in which mother-of-pearl lilies floated in the water. There was a large square room on the right of the hall, furnished in heavy, brocaded, blue velvet curtains, with divans, chairs and a davenport, upholstered with the same material as that of the curtains. There was a veiled gauze of lighter blue, over the windows, which softened the effects of the light. There were costly, Oriental rugs, and rare paintings, which lent the last touch of finish and good taste to this Salon.

The dining-room was fitted out in solid, old mahogany, with mirrors on every side.

The floor of the bedroom was covered with white, fox skins. There were many soft, silk pillows and cushions, in

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pink and blue, which harmonized with the rose decorations. The furniture was enamelled in pure white.

The bathroom was lined with blue, mosaic pieces, with mirrors on the sides, and on the ceiling. The bath tub was of immense size. The water ran in from ducks' heads. There was an abundance of towels and bath kimono's carefully packed away in deep drawers, built in on one side. A concealed door from the bathroom afforded a means of exit to the main entrance hall, where the doors swung open to the outside world again.

CHAPTER XVII

Maxine Outwits Her Rival

“**I** WONDER what Richard is doing right now. His letter sounds so very unhappy, that I am distressed about it. No matter what our philosophy may be, there are times, when our perplexities confound us.”

Maxine re-read Richard's letter. It was full of disconcerting thoughts. He was dissatisfied, because he had not been able to get to France. The affairs of his office in Washington had been thrown into much confusion, since the Armistice was signed, by the large number of contracts, which the Government had made, for the purchase of supplies and equipment, which were not now needed. He had to spend much of his time, making adjustments; attempting to defeat selfish interests, and to protect the interests of the country.

As for Eleanor, she had been kinder and more amiable than she had ever been before, except during the early days of their married life. In fact, her amiability was, at times, almost tantalizing to Richard, because, for many years now, he had been accustomed to her petulance and capricious ill-humor. The apparent transformation of Eleanor's character would, undoubtedly, have been very gratifying to her husband, if he had not lost his heart to another woman, during the period of his wife's incorrigibility, — at least, at what seemed to have been the very climax of Richard's powers of endurance, when he found himself past forty years of age,

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the possessor of a fortune, which he had, himself, accumulated, but in which he could not find the same measure of satisfaction as would have come to him, had he survived the romantic illusion of his pre-married and early matrimonial experience. Then, too, he was always reflecting upon his childless state, and the reason back of it.

In the letter, which Maxine still held in her hand, Richard commented upon the fact that Eleanor spent much of her time reading psychology, philosophy and religious literature. "At last," he said, "she is beginning to digest and to apply to her own life, many of the things which she reads." Then he went on to say, that he had always believed in maintaining a poised, undemonstrative religion within one's self, from day to day and year to year, during the whole period of lifetime, rather than to live impulsively and inconsistently, with intermittent flashes of good and strains of evil, interspersed along life's pathway. There were times when he was almost irritated by Eleanor's recently acquired virtues,—a patience which seemed to be an affectation, and a tranquillity, not capable of being agitated, not even when a real cause for agitation existed.

Richard's letter continued to comment upon the trying predicament, in which he found himself. He did not really want to take steps to secure his legal freedom from his wife, unless Maxine would consent to marry him. As matters were, he could adjust his affairs so that he would not be obliged to spend but very little time with Eleanor. They had been no more than good friends to each other, for many years. There would be no point in arranging a divorce between them, unless Richard was to be compensated by Maxine's companionship in the married state. He reserved to himself the thought that a disunion of his marriage relation, might interfere with the

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realization of his political aspirations, but, in his heart, he preferred Maxine's love to any office or honor in the world.

“Possibly, if he would go ahead and get his divorce, without putting the responsibility of this drastic action so much upon my shoulders, I would look at the matter differently. But it is the same old story, of the vital question being put up to the woman to decide. I believe that men always do that. I don't like to take it upon myself to make this whole decision, and I don't want to tell him that, perhaps, I would look at the matter differently, if he were to go ahead and get a divorce, when I am out of the country.

“In any event, I must dismiss debating this question so much in my own mind. It is taking too much of my best energy. I must live my life with continuity of purpose, and not introduce so many digressions, which are sure to bring disaster in the future. I must bring myself back to that plane of deep trust and understanding, where I will know that the events of my life are to be ordered in sequence, for my very best interests. I must not deviate from my innate, spiritual faith. I must not preach or advocate that which I do not practise. The degree of my deviation in this regard, would amount to just that much of insincerity, and I deem sincerity to be the very hall-mark of character.”

Just as Maxine had concluded these reflections, the door bell rang. She knew that it was Henry, who had come to take her to a performance of *Thais* at the Opera. She was always glad when she was about to see Henry; and now, she half reproved herself that she had not been anticipating his visit, instead of dwelling in so much reverie, concerning Richard and his affairs.

It was one of those wonderful evenings, when nature was serene and tranquil, — when the moon shone brilliantly, over

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the wide, open boulevards and park spaces of the Champs Elysees, with its formidably arranged rows of guns, some of which had been placed there for the defense of the city, and others, which had been captured from the Huns.

A typical, French driver, with rather shabby clothes, and a well-worn, silk hat, had brought Henry across the city in a phaeton, drawn by a sleek, well-groomed, bay horse. Now, Maxine and Henry were driving back, — slowly, — because Henry had told the cabby that they had plenty of time.

“ ‘So, this is Paris!’ ” ejaculated Henry, as they drove along. “ ‘I have been taking it all in pretty thoroughly, for the last several weeks. I want to be able to give some good descriptions of it, in my future writings, so I must learn all about it, or some one will bob up and say, that I really was never at the party at all.’ ”

“ ‘I shall be very anxious to read whatever you may write, when you go back to your newspaper work once more. Some day, you will do something, which I believe will be a permanent achievement in literature,’ ” said Maxine, encouragingly.

“ ‘If I don’t, it won’t be because you have failed in your efforts to make me believe that I can. You always give me confidence in myself, and now, I am working and studying, so as to be sure that I shall always have something substantial, on which to base my confidence. If I were not attached to the army, now, I would take a course of study at the Sorbonne.’ ”

They were at the Opera now, where they soon found themselves gazing on this elaborate spectacle of gorgeousness and splendor. The music was in perfect rhythm. The concordant notes and pealing strains of beauty seemed to be borne to the ears of the listeners on heavenly waves of ether,

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which made every sound clearly audible and expressive of its message.

When they left the Opera, it occurred to Maxine that the hour was so late that there was a strong possibility that Henry would be tardy in arriving at his headquarters at the Mediterranean Hotel, where the Couriers were billeted.

Maxine knew that such tardiness would mean discipline, and, perhaps, undue punishment for Henry, so she said :

“I think I had better have you put me in a taxicab here, and let me go to my apartment alone. It is only a few blocks, and I fear, if you are detained, that it will mean embarrassment for you.”

“No, indeed,” replied Henry, “I would not think of leaving you to yourself in this crowd.

“I shall see you safely into your apartment, no matter what the consequences may be, as affecting myself.”

Maxine had observed, previous to this, that Henry always insisted upon playing the gallant, chivalrous part, which was an innate attribute of his character.

After Maxine had bade Henry a rather hasty good-night, and thanked him for his consideration of her, she found herself back in the drawing room of her apartment, where she fell back, sighingly, into a big, easy chair, in front of the fire, which Fanchette always had ready for her, when she came home.

“Is it right that I should continue to spend so much time with Henry? He seems to need me, though, and I fear that as time goes on, the feeling may come over me, that I need him. Propinquity of congenial spirits is dangerous. When I began to see him so often, it was because I believed, in my heart, that I could help him to find himself, and I know that I have. But the question is, are we not getting closer together,

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so that we depend upon each other more? Is it best that a young, comparatively inexperienced man shall go on enjoying the society, so frequently, of a woman who is seven years older than himself? Will it, in the last analysis, result in happiness for either of us? Do such affairs usually terminate fortunately?

“What is not best for both can not be best for either of us.

“But, in spite of myself, my thoughts frequently travel back to Richard. Will I ever be able, in the face of his matrimonial handicap, to put him, forever, out of my life, so far as becoming a life companion is concerned?” These were the questions which passed, at a galloping pace, through Maxine’s mind.

Meanwhile, Henry Strong was doing some thinking himself, while journeying along, at a belated hour, toward the Mediterranean.

“Really, ought I to go on with this? I seem to be falling in love with her, more and more, every day. I seem to grow increasingly sure of my feelings toward her,—but it will be a long time, before I shall have the courage to tell her so. If I should tell her, and then in later years, find myself mistaken, it would be a fatal experience. I know that it is easier, and less dangerous, to say less than we mean, than it is to say all that we mean, and then, some time find out that our judgment has proven to be fallible. I know that it is easier to get mixed up in a love affair, than it is to extricate one’s self therefrom. I have had my school-boy love affairs, both in high school and in college, and then, suddenly, I have awakened to find it all a silly dream. This is the first time that any one of the feminine variety has held my interest for so long, and my interest, in this case, is based upon a knowledge of her

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worth and character and ability to appeal to, inspire and bring out the best that there is in me.

“After all, Paris would be dreadfully lonesome without her, and I suspect that, possibly, it might be equally dreary for her, without me, although she has many more outside resources for amusement and entertainment than I have.”

As Henry walked into the military headquarters of the Couriers, anticipating that he would, probably, have to face a lieutenant, who seemed to find his greatest joy in life in disciplining the soldiers under him, he reproved himself, somewhat, for having indulged himself, so confidently, in the thought that Maxine fully reciprocated his feelings toward her. He recalled that she had talked to him once about acquiring more assurance; now, he feared that, possibly, he was overdoing the matter, — and that he had mistaken her generous, unselfish interest in him for something greater and more vital than it really was.

The following evening, when he met Maxine by appointment, at the famous Henry Restaurant, where they were to dine, she questioned him at once, as to whether the incidents of the previous evening had not made him late at his headquarters. He admitted that his arrival there had put him in arrears about five minutes, and when Maxine questioned him further, she learned that Strong's Lieutenant had sentenced him to kalsomine the ceiling of the barracks, as a punishment for his tardiness. But Henry assured her:

“The privilege of being of any service to you is a bountiful compensation for any curtailment of my personal privileges, or, in fact, for any incarceration which could be inflicted upon me.”

“It distresses me though to have you punished in this

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manner, because it is so unnecessary. There was no reason why you should not have sent me home alone," she replied.

"No, indeed. You are doing too many wonderful things to help the boys out, for even the slightest negligence of you, ever to be tolerated by any of us. I know that right now you are spending about three hours every day, when you are not in the field, in interviewing individual officers, to solicit favors or privileges for the private soldiers. Private Jensen told me today, that it was due to your influence, that his Sergeant's stripes were not taken away from him. That was as kind and just a thing as you could have possibly done. Simply because he had been riding in a mail coach, guarding the Couriers' mail, for three nights in succession, without any sleep, he took it upon himself, to engage a room in a Y. M. C. A., Hotel, instead of sleeping with his Pal, who had invited another boy to share his bunk, — not knowing that Jensen was coming back that night."

"Yes, Major Wilbur had assured me, so many times, that the laws providing for the trial of private soldiers in military courts, were just and fair, that I determined to 'call his bluff,' so to speak. Then he really had to offer to give Jensen proper counsel to defend him. The Captain, who was assigned to take charge of Jensen's case, was entirely outside of the group of officers who command Jensen, so that when this little surprise was sprung upon them, they simply dropped their charges against Jensen," explained Maxine.

"Yes, and doesn't that show what 'influence' will do, toward getting a 'square deal' for a fellow?"

"Yes, of course, we all know that 'influence' counts for more than it should."

"You have helped so many boys to secure justice, that that achievement alone is worthy of your having come to

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France. You have used, to the best advantage, your unfailing logic, and you have exercised, effectively, your womanly charms, in a becoming and legitimate manner, wherever the exigencies of the situation have required you to do so. Of course, your natural, feminine attractiveness has strengthened and accentuated your influence, wherever you have presented yourself," concluded Henry.

"I don't believe that I told you about my experience, a few evenings ago, when I addressed several hundred of the Military Police. I really dreaded this very much, but I started in, by telling them that 'M. P.' to me, stood for something more than Military Police; that it stood for Mighty Polite, and that I considered the members of the A. E. F., including the Military Police, to be the mightiest, politest men, who had served in the World War. I told them also, that 'M. P.' should stand for Mercy for the Privates, but instead of that, that I believed it stood, more often, for 'Mademoiselle Promenade.' "

"That was very good wit, indeed, and I am sure that it pleased them," commented Henry.

The very next day, while walking near the Madeleine, Maxine chanced to meet a Miss Viola Gardner, who had been a passenger on the same ship, on which Maxine had come to France. Miss Gardner informed her that she was about to be sent home, with a dishonorable discharge, for a minor violation of the rules, which governed the social service organization, to which she was attached. Maxine believed Miss Gardner to be a well-meaning, although sometimes, indiscreet, young woman, who had made a misleading statement on the blank which she had filled out, when she joined the civilian society, which had sent her over-seas. She had written in "No" in

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answer to the question "Have you any male relatives, or a fiancé, serving in the A. E. F. in France?"

Afterwards, it had been discovered, by some of the women authorities, in the Paris office, that Miss Gardner was engaged to a Lieutenant in the Twenty-sixth Division.

Maxine thought that the discipline and punishment, which had been administered to the young woman, was too harsh, and so she volunteered to go to the office of the Red Cross, and try to intercede in Miss Gardner's behalf, hoping to secure a modification of the words "dishonorable discharge," which were incorporated in the young woman's papers of dismissal.

Maxine succeeded in influencing the women officials of the Red Cross, to subdue and soften, in tone and language, the allegations in their formal charges against Miss Gardner; but, nevertheless, the offending young woman was to be dismissed and sent home, informally, without complaint, as to her conduct, or any penalty for misbehavior attached to her credentials of demobilization.

A few days before Miss Gardner was to sail, Maxine invited her to dine with her, because she wished to soften, in the memory of the unfortunate young woman, the latter's unpleasant experience. To add to the pleasure of this occasion, Maxine invited Henry to join them.

As a matter of fact, Viola Gardner was a divorced widow, who had assumed her maiden name, and she understood all the arts and manoeuvres of coquettish, fascinating widows of her kind, and withal, she esteemed Maxine to be a very proper sort of person; but she attributed to her hostess, a greater degree of innocence, in regard to many worldly matters, than the latter possessed. Thus it happened, that Maxine was not altogether unconscious of the bewitching glances, which Miss Gardner cast in the direction of Maxine's young knight.

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Miss Gardner, who was very sophisticated and experienced in flirtatious proceedings, trusted to her artful resources, to conceal from her hostess, her attempts to make a one-evening conquest of the young soldier's heart.

Maxine was, ostensibly, perfectly oblivious to her rival's manoeuvring, which encouraged the charming, coquettish Miss Gardner to go to a greater length in her attempted flirtation, than she would have dared to go, had she understood that Maxine was more worldly-wise than the pretty, blonde flirt imagined her to be.

In fact, Maxine was secretly amused by the spirit of coquetry of her guest, and by the playful rejoinders of Henry. With her characteristic liberality of mind, Maxine entered into the spirit of the occasion sufficiently to leave Miss Gardner alone with Henry, for a few minutes;—that the two might have an opportunity for a *teté-a-teté*. Accordingly, she made an excuse that she must speak to Fanchette about something, and absented herself from the room for about fifteen minutes.

During this time, Miss Gardner made it known to the young soldier that it would be agreeable to her to know him much better, providing their attraction was a mutual one.

“You are a young man after my own heart,” said Miss Gardner to Henry. “Just the kind that I have been looking for.”

Henry responded playfully, “Well, isn't it fortunate, then, that you found me?”

“Yes, indeed. I've never been to the Pantheon de la Guerre. Would you be able to take me there tomorrow?”

“Yes, if I can get permission to take two or three hours off, I will be glad to take you.”

These last words fell upon Maxine's ears just as she came

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into the room, where she found Henry sort of hovering over Miss Gardner, as a humming bird hovers over a flower.

At the instant, her feelings alternated between amusement and a slight degree of resentment; but she was too diplomatic to do anything but ignore the matter. Her self-control did her great credit. It was a part of Maxine's philosophy, never to say anything to anybody, or about anybody, — the influence of which she did not wish to have become permanent in that person's life.

Of course, Henry was only testing Maxine's good nature, to ascertain for himself whether her amiability was as much a part of her character and development as was her well-known ability.

When it came time for Miss Gardner to leave, Henry escorted her home. After they left, Maxine reflected somewhat, on the incidents of the evening, which she had succeeded in making interesting for her guests. She half-guessed the truth, that Henry's apparent interest in Miss Gardner was only a way which he took to amuse himself, and at the same time, to reassure himself as to Maxine's broad-mindedness and amiable spirit of toleration.

The next day, a messenger boy delivered the following letter at Maxine's apartment:

My dear Maxine:

No doubt the incidents of last evening may require some explanation. I feel that an explanation, if not an apology, is due you.

I was only playing, — jesting.

When you made an excuse to leave the room, I made a tentative engagement to meet Miss Gardner today. Only a few minutes ago, I succeeded, after

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an hour's effort, in reaching her on the telephone at her Pension, and told her that a situation had arisen, which made it impossible for me to see her today. She understood, also, from other things I said to her, that I was not at all in earnest in my conversation with her last evening. I only wanted to see how far she would go with her audacious flirtation, and so, I led her on a little bit.

I did not admire her taste in flaunting herself in your face in such an unbecoming manner, and I confess that my own conduct was as ungallant, as was hers, indiscreet.

However, I know you will understand now, that this facetious, little incident was all in jest.

I know the taste of rancid butter, and while this may be an unhappily chosen figure of speech, I can not think of anything which better expresses my feeling toward women of her kind.

I want to tell you that your breadth of mind, and amiable attitude, during this ungracious circumstance, register high with me, and have stamped themselves upon my memory.

You are a true, army brother, as well as a womanly woman, and I pay you the tribute of saying that I want to be worthy of the privilege to know you always, and the honor to be counted, forever, among those who are your nearest and dearest.

I am sending, by the messenger, with this letter, a box of candy, which I just bought at the commissary, — the only place where real candy can be obtained in Paris.

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I will call to take you to dinner at seven o'clock
this evening.

Ever yours,
Henry.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Inspiration

IT WAS the first of April, 1919. Maxine had landed in France on the twenty-third day of March, 1918. She was beginning to grow a little weary of the strenuousness of her work in the field. It was true that it had been a little less strenuous since the Armistice, because she had been able to arrange to spend about one-third of her time in Paris, — for the past four months. During that period, she had kept up a frequent correspondence, both by cable and letter, with many of the Chambers of Commerce, in the Eastern cities of the United States. Through this means, she had helped to secure many positions for soldiers, who were prepared to render service, along specialized lines. For instance, the Chamber of Commerce in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, found places for many mining engineers. Other similar organizations opened opportunities in the manufacturing industries of New England, — the farming communities of the Middle States, and various commercial enterprises of the large cities, where traveling salesmen would be needed.

As soon as the Armistice was signed, Maxine had anticipated the situation of unemployment, which would follow the war. She knew that the boys back in the States, who had not been sent to France, would have the opportunities to place themselves, before the Over-Seas boys could be demobilized;

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— at least, whatever competition existed, would be in favor of the soldiers, who had not been sent to France.

While engaged in public speaking to the troops, Maxine had been obliged to live so much of the time in peasants' homes, poor hotels, and inferior Pensions, that she was beginning to feel the need of a complete rest, and change. So she arranged with Colonel Hinckley, who had charge of her service record, to give her a little office in the Malesherbes, where she could meet, by appointment, several soldiers every day, to help them to solve the many problems which confronted them. By this time, Maxine's acquaintance, in the army, was so broad that she was kept very busy in meeting all of the soldiers, who sought advice or assistance, in Paris.

With the multitude of duties, which she took it upon herself to perform, she found time to do many things, which helped to give to Henry an inspirational stimulation for a useful and brilliant career. She made several scrap-books, containing articles, stories and speeches of famous men, and continued to remind him that the highest success and greatest career, within the gift of the gods, were within his reach and grasp.

She frequently told him that it was within his power to attain high office, — dictate public policies, and become a leader in worldly achievement. All of this encouragement bore fruit in Henry's mind and development.

One night as he was walking back to the army headquarters, after he had dined with Maxine at her apartment, he was thinking to himself: "If I felt sure that she would accept me I would make plans to marry her, some time. Of course, it is unfortunate that she is older than I, but I will not let that stand as a barrier between us.

"She knows how to take care of a home; look after the

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personal comforts of the members of a household, and above all, she knows how to stimulate the ambition of the man in whom she is interested, as I imagine few women know how to do. She is well-schooled in all these arts, and her accomplishments are happily combined, because she possesses the attributes of a modern woman, and all the virtues and best attainments of our grandmothers.

“I believe that she is naturally affectionate, too; — that she is sentimental, as well as mental. She is personally attractive and intellectually magnetic, — a combination rather unusual, in any woman.

“This is the first sustained case that I have ever had. I have had girls, but not one of them has ever registered with me as she does.

“I doubt if I shall ever be any happier than I have been, during the time which I have spent with her.

“If I do not marry her, I am bound to be disappointed in the one whom I do marry, because I shall always look back on this experience, as a period of perfect happiness.

“After all, they say that few men have the sense to marry right. She has every inducement, and every virtue which any woman should have.

“If married, we could and would, live in a world of our own, regardless of what anyone else might think of the match.”

Continuing his soliloquy, after he arrived at his room, he thought:

“Yes, she is the biggest enigma among womankind, whom I have ever known. I can not understand why she has not married before this. One of her genteel endowments and accomplishments has surely had many suitors and opportunities for marriage.

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“Unless we are both sure, — very sure, of our love for each other, we must not become so attached to each other, that either one of us will be unable to live contentedly, without the other.”

Only a day or two after this soliloquy, Henry stopped at the LaFayette Galleries Department Store, to take Maxine home from a shopping expedition. He waited for her a few moments, at the entrance. She soon arrived; — her cheeks flushed with the excitement, which had ensued from a hurried afternoon, attended by much exertion. She had just purchased a grayish-blue, georgette frock, which hung in pleats from the narrow waist line. The pleats were ornamented with a tracery of silver, which extended around both sides of the skirt. The ends of the sleeves and the flat, turn-over collar were, likewise, traced with silver threads of the same design, as those of the skirt.

As soon as they arrived at Maxine's apartment, she excused herself, and requested Fanchette to assist her in donning her new garment. In a minute or two, Fanchette brought forth, from one of the bureau drawers, a pair of sheer, blue, silk stockings, with satin slippers to match. These habiliments completed the harmony of Maxine's costume. Fanchette dressed her hair in graceful coils of marcelled waves, slightly pushed forward over her forehead and temples. This style of hairdressing was in contrast with that of Mary Ann Milton, who had always insisted that Maxine's beauty was enhanced, and her features most pleasingly presented, when her hair was combed back from her forehead.

After dinner, which had proved to be another one of Fanchette's and Maxine's skillful feats in artistic cookery, Maxine and Henry were seated in front of the fire-place, talking over the events of the day, and the week.

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Suddenly, Henry reminded himself that he had brought with him a package, which he had forgotten to take from his over-coat pocket. He went to get it, and then handed it to her, remarking, as he did so:

“You always look so remarkably well, and you look so especially well tonight, that it brought to my mind, this little gift, which I bought for you today.”

“You are always doing something generous for me. What have you been doing now?”

Maxine unwrapped the box, in which was carefully packed a handsomely engraved, silver backed mirror, of the finest, French-made glass.

“It is very unique. The pattern is of such unusual design. It looks as though it might have belonged to Josephine, when she lived in the Palace of the Tuilleries. Thank you so much, Henry. I shall always prize this highly.”

“I found it in a shop in the Rue de la Paix. They had no other toilet articles, which matched it, or I would have bought the complete set.

“I thought that it was just the kind of mirror that I would want to have, if I were a woman,” said Henry.

“You thought exactly right. Every time that I look in it, I shall always think of you,” graciously responded Maxine.

“That will be a generous reward, in proportion to the little time and thought which it required for me to select it.

“You look so charming tonight, that just now, I am wondering with what fate I should meet if I should covet for myself one of the privileges which, evidently, the Brigadier-General, whom you mentioned, some time ago, sought for himself. Of course, I do not flatter myself that I should meet with any happier fate than that of my superior, — the renowned Brigadier-General,” cleverly remarked Henry.

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“You have no superiors,” quickly answered Maxine.

“Well, then, perhaps, granting that I may be the equal of some of the men who wear bars and oak leaves and eagles and stars, still, I might meet, in seeking your special womanly favors, with the same cold repulse with which the distinguished Brigadier-General and other officers, have met.”

“Put all such nonsensical notions out of your head, — that is, I mean, any ideas which would be the same as those which they had. They are unworthy of you.

“I want you to use all your best energies for progress and achievement.

“Probably you are familiar with these lines from Goethe:

“ ‘Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute;
What you can do, or think you can, begin it;
Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.
When once engaged, the mind becomes heated;
Begin now, and then the work will be completed.’ ”

“That’s just what I was trying to do, — to become engaged, and I can definitely assure you, that the poet was right in regard to what he said, concerning boldness, which I don’t believe I have succeeded in using to the very best advantage, for there doesn’t seem to have been much genius, power or magic in it, judging from the results, which I am getting,” smilingly asserted Henry.

“We’ll talk about this some other time, when, perhaps, it will be more fitting for us to do so, than it is right now. There is a reason why I can not discuss this subject seriously with you, right now, so let us talk of something else.

“I am more in earnest than you know when I speak of your natural abilities for public service. Your literary tastes,

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—inclination to contact people,—and your studious habits, will, when developed in the right proportion, fit you for a career of prominence in journalism, diplomacy, or statesmanship.

“Your aptitude for such a career is indicated daily, by your reading, conversation, and the watchful eye which you keep on the proceedings of the Peace Conference.

“I want to live to see you in a place of power, where your leadership may help to bring to our country a realization of the best and truest national ideals, for the United States,” concluded Maxine.

“If, in the future, I shall ever prove myself qualified for the sacred trusts, which you do me the honor to mention, in connection with your aspirations for me, — let me say that I shall owe my honors and distinction to you.

“The inspiration which has come to me, from the many, many happy hours spent with you, — you may, perhaps, not realize.

“Such words as have just fallen from your lips have made me wish to live in such a manner as to express the best which there is in me.

“I am conscious, however, of my limitations. I sometimes think that my Texanic spirit, of which you have so often spoken, makes me too frank, — too abrupt, — too much inclined to state things as they are, — and that these candid attributes of my character make me appear to lack gentility; at least, this is true of the surface, although inwardly, I flatter myself that I am gentle, if not outwardly, genteel.”

“Henry, do you remember the words of the proverbial Irishman who said:

“ ‘Ability without gentility, is like pudding without fat;

“ ‘But gentility without ability, is ten times worse than that’ ?”

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Henry laughed heartily at this apt reference to Irish wit.

“I have observed, Maxine, that in our conversations, you always put me to the fore, and yourself to the rear, — a very tactful, genteel, complimentary thing for you to do; but you must know that I enjoy hearing you talk of other subjects besides myself, and the capacity and equipment, which you believe I possess for a successful conclusion of my career; — although I confess that I have my share of masculine egotism,” remarked Henry.

“But you will not deny me the pleasure of talking of that which most interests me. From my early girlhood, I was always keenly interested in reading and hearing of those men who had an immaculate conception of public trust.

“While in boarding-school, during my senior year, I elected to read Nicolay and Hay’s *Life of Lincoln*. I liked Lincoln’s homespun philosophy, — his good humor and wholesome wit. Above all, I loved to read of his honesty.

“His tall, angular, even ungainly figure, only enhanced, in my mind, my admiration for his unique and peerless character.

“And do you know, that as I observed your profile, a few days ago, as you were standing by the window, your resemblance to ‘Honest Abe’, — at least, to the pictures which I have seen of him, — was almost uncanny; — and as you quoted to me his Gettysburg Address, about a week ago, it seemed to me that your fidelity to Lincoln’s message was almost uncanny.”

“That is the finest compliment, which I have ever had paid to me, except, perhaps, that from my school-mates back in Texas. I should never have thought of mentioning this, if you had not spoken as you did a moment ago; and I know you

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will believe that I speak with due humility when I tell you that one of my earliest recollections as a college freshman, was the reference of my class-mates to me as 'Abe.' That was the nick-name, so to speak, which they gave me, when I appeared in my first debate.

"Secretly, this made me proud and happy, and more than that, it gave me the determination within, to study, imitate, and follow the principles and teachings of that great master; — Lincoln, whose name I revere, and whose memory I honor, with my whole being.

"I believe I have read, carefully, every one of Lincoln's public addresses. In fact, it was my memory of distinctive, public utterances of Lincoln, which kept up my courage so many times, when I was only a mere private in the army. They served me in better stead than the words of some of our modern statesmen. They helped to sustain my morale, when the vacillating speeches of some of our contemporary men in public life would, perhaps, have made me weak and faltering."

"I remember, as a college girl," said Maxine, "of having read Carlyle's 'Heroes and Hero Worship,' and you may recall that he said: 'Certainly this is a fearful business, that of having your able man to seek and not knowing in what manner to proceed about it. That is the world's sad predicament.'

"I have always thought it a fortunate, political turn of events that Lincoln was discovered and brought forward, and I have often wished that we might either have more such political accidents, or that we might devise some more efficient system for bringing forward men with a genius for statesmanship," commented Maxine.

"Yes, the weak spot in Democracy is that it generally

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chooses its leaders by popularity, and not by efficiency," said Henry.

"But to revert to Lincoln, I have often thought that if every young man of natural intelligence and strong patriotic inclination would devote himself assiduously to a study of the teachings, principles, and practices of Lincoln, that the country would be well taken care of, politically, — and not only politically, but educationally, industrially, socially and even religiously. Certainly, young men of political aspirations, who undertake public careers, would render better service, — and in other vocations and professions, the same consequences would follow.

"The chemist, for instance, would be a better chemist, — the merchant, a more honest merchant, — the banker, a more thorough financier, — the physician, a more efficient adviser and conservator of public health, — the tailor would make better clothes; the mechanic would do a more skillful day's work; and the average citizen, in every walk of life, would be more earnest in his desire to perform the humblest service, well," concluded Henry.

"I wish that every young man could have your vision and understanding of the responsibilities of good citizenship and political stewardship," said Maxine.

"I wish that every young woman enjoyed discussing these things, and appreciated their importance as much as you do.

"You have the power and personality to direct and control the best and highest attributes of a man's character. Would that this were true of all women!

"You remember that Ruskin said, in his 'Queens' Gardens':

" 'And whether consciously or not, you must be, in many a heart enthroned; there is no putting by that crown; queens

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you must always be; queens to your lovers; queens to your husbands and your sons; queens of higher mystery to the world beyond, which bows itself and will forever bow before the myrtle crown and the stainless sceptre of womanhood. But alas! many of you are often idle and careless queens, grasping at majesty in the least things, while you abdicate it in the greatest; leaving misrule and violence to work their will among men in defiance of the power which, holding straight in gift from the Prince of all Peace, the wicked among you betray and the good forget.'

"Ruskin also says that woman 'must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise, — wise, not for self-development but for self-renunciation.' To me, you have always met this test, — this standard written of by Ruskin.

"You will recall that Ruskin said, too: 'It is the type of an eternal truth that the soul's armor has never been well set to the heart unless a woman's hand has braced it, and it is only when she braces it loosely that the honor of manhood fails.'

"You have braced this armor well to my heart. I can never thank you sufficiently for this."

"It is an honor to play any part at all, no matter how small in the worthy career, which I contemplate for you," modestly answered Maxine.

"In your relationship with me, you have never left a stone unturned which should have been turned in the direction of consummating my highest interest," volunteered Henry.

"I shall be very proud to remember this when you shall have ascended the heights of greatness, and shall have been proclaimed among the greatest men of your day," said Maxine, earnestly.

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“If ever I make this ascent, you shall be justified in thinking: ‘I made him that which he is; I helped him to erect his foundation; I inspired the vision, which led him to his achievement.’

“Our friendship has been like a revelation of the Scriptures. I have never experienced anything which approximated it in sublimity, and never expect to do so again. You merit a very rich reward for your unselfish interest in me; — whether or not you ever receive such a reward, — you deserve it with compound interest,” Henry assured her.

“I shall be satisfied to know that you think me entitled to such a reward. I crave no other reward than this;— than to know, always, that you deemed my companionship worth while, and found, as you have said, inspiration in it.

“Somewhere a poet prettily said:

“ ‘If I could mount to Heavenly heights;
And ask one gift of the white-winged choir;
I would ask no greater gift,
Than to be able to inspire.’ ”

CHAPTER XIX

The Great Adventures of Life

“**M**ADAME, la Princesse Prexy désire vous parler par telephone si vous voulez bien.”

“Merci,” answered Maxine, to Fanchette’s summons.

“I hope that she doesn’t want this apartment back. She’s the Russian Princess, you know, who has the long lease on it. I am only her tenant, and I agreed, when she sub-let this place to me, to let her have it back whenever she wanted it,” remarked Maxine to Henry, while she hurried to answer the telephone in the alcove, just off the drawing-room of this palatial, Parisienne dwelling.

“Comment vous portez vous, Princesse?”

“Je vous prie de m’excuser si vous me permettez de revenir vous voir.”

“Je suis heureuse de vous voir de suite,” responded Maxine.

“Je suis tres pressée je viendrai maintenant, au revoir et merci,” said the Princess, and then hung up.

“The Princess is coming over right away. She seemed to be in a rather disturbed state of mind. It makes me a little uneasy. She is a very charming woman. I went to tea with her only a few days ago, and yesterday, I had her here for luncheon. You haven’t met her, have you? I want to introduce you to her. She is such a vivacious, interesting character,—just brimming over with emotion and enthu-

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siasm, — full of ideas and schemes for getting her estates in Russia restored to her. She is a widow, whose husband was killed in one of the Bolshevistic uprisings. She fled from Russia incognito, under the protection of the All-Russian Government, which instructed her to proceed in the disguise of a house-maid, as though she were taking advantage of an opportunity to free herself from the heavy yoke and arduous discipline of a nobleman's household.

“She was telling me yesterday about the many exciting experiences which she had, while making her escape. The officers of the All-Russian Army, who understood her status, of course, protected her, but at the same time, they tried, as much as they dared, to make love to her. The officers, on the other hand, in the Bolshevik Army, who believed that she was only a servant-maid, converted to their cause, attempted to detain her, — but she was liberated and brought out of Russia by an American officer, who had been sent to bring Allied prisoners back to France and England. Her husband had some investments in Paris, which he had made several years ago, and these amounts, with the sums of money which she has been able to receive from her own properties in Russia, — through the influence and intercession of the old Russian Embassy here in Paris, have enabled her to live with some degree of comfort, — although when rubles became so depreciated in value, she was obliged to seek less expensive living quarters than these. She seems in such haste to see me, that I am inclined to think that she has had some good news, — that something has happened which will enable her to take back this apartment. If that is so, then I shall go back to the Grand Hotel for the remainder of my stay in France, because it would not pay me to try to find another desirable apartment, for the short interval between now and

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the time when I will, undoubtedly, be going home." Maxine had hardly finished these remarks to Henry, before Fanchette announced that Princess Prexy had arrived.

"Trés bien. Depechez-vous. Je reverrai Princess tout de suite," Maxine instructed Fanchette.

Maxine and the Princess exchanged affectionate greetings, after which Henry was presented to her Royal guest.

A few preliminary remarks preceded the introduction of the subject which Princess Prexy had come to discuss. Henry politely volunteered to excuse himself, in the event that there was anything of a confidential nature, which the Princess wished to say to Maxine. By this time, however, the little Russian lady felt perfectly at ease in the society of the Texan, so she begged him to stay and listen to all that she had to tell. In animated manner the Princess related a strange story of romance, and abiding heart-interest in the life of an American soldier, — a Lieutenant who had been picked up from a prisoners' camp in Turkey, while the party with which she had come out of Russia was passing through Constantinople, — on their way to Paris.

His name was James Stanwood. He had been captured, while he was receiving instruction in aerial navigation, from the British naval air forces. He had been apprenticed to them for several weeks, before their bombardment of Constantinople, July 7, 1918, and was so ill-fated as to have been one of a few to be captured by the merciless Turks.

He belonged to a family of wealth and position in New York, — was a graduate of Harvard, and before he entered the army, he had experimented quite successfully in aeronautics over Long Island and thereabouts. For many years, he had been secretary of the Aero Club of New York City.

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He had fallen much in love with Princess Prexy on their long journey over the continent from Constantinople to Paris.

After she had been in Paris several weeks, she had met, at the American Embassy, a Brigadier-General from the United States. Maxine was not a little surprised when she learned that this General's name was Swanson, — a description of whom proved him to be the same man who had so ardently attempted to woo her only a few months before.

Now, the Princess poured out upon Maxine's ears, a tale of almost unceasing attention and uninterrupted devotion on the part of General Swanson in his recent courtship of the Princess herself. Of late, he had discovered that the little Russian beauty favored the suit of Lieutenant Stanwood, whose efforts to win the favor of the Princess had been no less earnest than those of his military superior; — but to the amazement and chagrin of General Swanson, young Stanwood had won the race in the contest for the Royal lady's affections. This defeat had so humiliated this conceited, military dignitary, that he was bent upon a policy of unrelenting vengeance toward both the Princess and his rival. Accordingly, he had watched every possible opportunity, which might lead to the gratification of his own deep-seated desire for revenge.

Very recently, the Princess had given an informal party at her home. A number of young officers had been bidden. During the evening, Lieutenant Stanwood had been taken very ill, — so much so that his condition required the immediate attention of a physician. One of the army doctors came to attend him, and stated that his malady was so far developed, that unless it was very necessary, he would not remove him for the time being to a hospital, because of the imminent, overhanging danger. The doctor, who was a

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Major in the American Army, explained the situation to Princess Prexy, who immediately insisted, that under the circumstances, she would not permit the young Lieutenant to be taken away from her apartment. She would, she said, keep him there until he was completely out of danger, and she would esteem it a privilege to act as his nurse until he should recover.

Major Thomas, the attending physician, stated that he would make a report which would excuse Lieutenant Stanwood's absence from Clignancourt, — but in some way, the papers, granting a formal leave of absence were not completed. This news came to the ears of General Swanson, who at once, saw to it that the charge of Away Without Leave, (A. W. O. L.) was filed against Stanwood. As soon as the Lieutenant was able to leave his bed, he was incarcerated in a military prison at Clignancourt by the orders of Brigadier-General Swanson, who, now, even refused to permit Princess Prexy to visit her soldier sweetheart.

And so, the Princess with intense emotion and distress of mind, poured out her heart to Maxine, whose sympathies she sought to enlist.

Her words could not have fallen on more susceptible ears, because Maxine had, since the later developments of her acquaintance with General Swanson, suspected him of being a hard-hearted, cold-blooded, selfish man. She assured Princess Prexy that she would at once take the matter up with General Dimock, and she would, at the same time, speak to Colonel Hinckley, whose word from the "inside" would go a long ways at Army headquarters. That very afternoon, Maxine and Henry accompanied the Princess to Clignancourt. The mention of Maxine's name proved to be the Open Sesame to all the privileges which the Princess was seeking.

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They visited Lieutenant Stanwood in his cell, and carried to him a basket of goodly edibles, — so that the misery of his incarceration was greatly subdued and minimized by the visit and work of the good Samaritans.

Within a week after this incident, Maxine had succeeded in securing the influence of General Dimock, who had ordered a final dismissal of the charges which had been preferred against Lieutenant Stanwood. When Maxine's request reached General Dimock, he found in his records a statement signed by General Swanson, which demanded, at once, a court-martial trial of Stanwood. This requisition was of course, dishonored, and a final investigation of the case eventually resulted in the demotion of General Swanson from the rank of Brigadier-General to that of Colonel in the United States Army.

The Princess married Lieutenant Stanwood, whose inheritance of a substantial fortune from his father, resulted in circumstances which made the retrieval of her own fallen fortunes less important,—and not at all necessary so far as her future security was concerned.

Thus, did a beautiful, fairy Princess, by revealing the "milk of human kindness" which flowed so gently through her veins, win her way back to the status of wealth and prestige, which she had so involuntarily abdicated. She assured Maxine, with gratitude, that the apartment occupied by her would be at her disposal as long as her benefactress desired it.

"Let's go around to the Louvre," suggested Henry to Maxine, just as they had come from a visit to Clignancourt, where they had learned that the case against Lieutenant Stanwood had met with a prompt dismissal.

As they walked leisurely through the corridors of this

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renowned gallery, Maxine observed a bust of Brutus. There was a youthful expression, radiating a spirit of optimism, which had survived through the turbulent times of that altruist's noteworthy career. The countenance revealed placidity, gentility, and spirituality.

"But, mark you," said Maxine, "the face seems a little too credulous,—and I have sometimes thought this same thing of you,—that you might sometimes allow yourself to be imposed upon by too great credulity, as did poor Brutus."

"Well, your remark will serve to put me on my guard. Possibly I have too great faith in human nature.

"How true it is that we all need something, or someone, to save ourselves from ourselves;—to reveal ourselves to ourselves in order that we may arrive at a proper understanding of ourselves;—and we all need something to inspire us.

"An incentive is always essential to success. What an avalanche of ability goes crashing down the mountain sides of time, cut in twain by a piercing glacier of unkind, destructive criticism.

"Without inspiration and a definite objective, few characters are strong enough to make much of a score in the world."

As they paused before the bust of Octavia, Henry remarked:

"What a pity that Mark Antony failed to appreciate her. Had he profited by the association and companionship of such a woman, he might have been the master of the world."

"Yes, but how much better to have borne the fate of the unfortunate, deserted Octavia, than to have been destined to play the cruel part of the heartless Cleopatra.

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“And yet, there is a little of the Cleopatra in all of us, and something, too, of the Octavia. There must needs be a constant struggle in the best of us, between the elements of a virtuous, idealistic Octavia, and the characteristics of a sensual, selfish Cleopatra,” replied Maxine.

On their way back to Maxine’s apartment, as they started to cross the Champs-Elysees, Henry was accosted by a dejected looking, American soldier, who bore every evidence of having suffered from shell-shock. The unfortunate boy thus stated his situation:

“I have been a casual ever since about two months before the Armistice. I have had neither my army pay nor my mail, during all that time, — since I was discharged from a hospital, after the Battle of St. Mihiel. I must either get some money this afternoon, or turn bandit this evening.”

Henry put his hand in his pocket, and true to his big, generous nature, he handed his Buddy fifty francs. Maxine took from her beaded bag a card, on which she wrote a brief message. “Take this to Colonel Hinckley at Clignancourt, and he will straighten you out,” she said, as she pressed the note into the discouraged boy’s hand.

That evening, while Henry and Maxine were at dinner in her apartment, they went back, in their conversation, to the Louvre, and the incidents of the afternoon. They mentioned again many of the famous women of history, dwelling at length upon the important parts played by those who had determined the destinies, to a great degree, of their sons, husbands, and even the countries themselves, in which they had made history.

“If you could have chosen your own sex, as you entered the world, would you have preferred to be a man?” queried Henry.

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“No,” answered Maxine, “I would have elected to be of the feminine persuasion.”

“You are the first woman, whom I have ever known who expressed a preference for incarnation as a member of the so-called, weaker sex,” replied Henry, in a tone which indicated a little surprise.

“I should have made that choice, without any hesitation, because I think that it is a greater satisfaction to be the wife of a successful man, and have the privilege of taking care of him; giving birth to, and rearing his children, than it is to go out into the world to compete with men in trade, industry, commerce and professional life, as all men have to do.

“I esteem it a greater blessing to be affectionately domiciled in a place of peace, surrounded by a garden wall of tender and chivalrous devotion, than it is to enter competitive fields, where the laws of social and political economy make business strife necessary.

“I believe it is a greater solace, in times of national danger, when international crises result in war, to know that one has given birth to a soldier, or several soldiers, who go forth to serve their country, than it is to know only the joys of paternal parenthood, — shielded, as the latter function is, by physical safety, at the time of childbirth, in contrast with the inevitable risk of life and necessary pain, which accompany maternal parenthood.

“To know that one has risked the Great Adventure, in order to permit another human to enter the world, is equal to, if not greater in achievement, than the risk of one’s life upon the battlefield, — because the period of pre-natal responsibility, — risk at birth, — and consequent responsibility after birth, calls for longer duration of service, as a rule,

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and more continuous, uninterrupted devotion to one's country, than any other effort," concluded Maxine.

"Mentally," said Henry, "you are about sixteen women in one. I have heard of 'sixteen to one' as a ratio for coining silver and gold, but I never before dreamed of a feminine personage, who would comprise sixteen personalities in one.

"You have a more complex personality than Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde ever approximated in the palmiest days of his double life.

"But your complexity lies in your versatility of mind and spiritual resources, instead of in a capacity for duplicity and dissimulation.

"I want to speak of something, if I may, which we have discussed before. You once paid me the compliment that I bore a resemblance in figure and facial expression to the portraits which you had seen of the immortal Lincoln.

"This tribute, although sincere on your part, I question in point of fact. I confess, however, that it made me very happy, at the time you spoke of it.

"Whether or not such a claim for my personal appearance could be in the least degree, substantiated, if that peerless statesman were living today, I doubt; but your suggestion that you observed a striking similarity in the profile of your humble servant to that of the man, whom I believe to have been our greatest national benefactor, fills me with inspiration; — even greater than it did, in my college days, when my classmates affectionately hailed me as 'Abe' on the campus, on the morning following my first college debate.

"I speak of all this now, because you have been so good and generous, in praising and applauding me; and I assure you, again, with gratitude, that if it be in my power, your praise and goodness shall bear fruit, during my entire life;

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and if the fruit be worthy the eating, I trust that those who partake of it shall radiate in the world as electrifying an influence for good, as you have continually sent forth to me. This is the only way whereby I can repay you, in the slightest degree for all that your influence has meant to me.

“And now that the time approaches when we shall be temporarily separated, and I shall precede you on the voyage to the United States, I want to give myself the pleasure of telling you that, just as you have appealed to every spark of idealism and divinity in my nature, by venturing to compare me, in any way whatsoever, with Abraham Lincoln and by telling me that I spoke with a sincere fidelity to Lincoln’s message, when I repeated his Gettysburg address, so I hope to appeal as strongly to the best and highest and noblest in you, when I assure you, that during our conversation just now, when you talked so glowingly, and discoursed so effectively on the Great Adventures of Life, and Birth and Motherhood, that you reminded me, in your concept of Valor and Courage and Unselfishness of that greatest of all women, —Joan of Arc, who occupies, as Mark Twain said ‘the loftiest plane possible to human achievement, — a loftier plane than has ever been achieved by any other mere mortal’.”

“Now there, dear boy, you are soaring to great heights; and while I adore your sincerity, I think you are going much too strong, when you compare me with Joan of Arc; so I am going to ask you to change the subject; just to make me comfortable,” protested Maxine.

“Very well; anything to please you!” ejaculated Henry. “But I think you should have permitted me the same indulgence as I granted you, when you first compared me with Lincoln.”

“But since you’ve suggested a change of conversational

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topic, what do you think will be General Pershing's final place in history?"

"In discussing General Pershing, let us proceed from the lighter to the greater side of his remarkable personality, and glowing achievements. First of all, on the social side, he has no superiors, and few equals, in the Courts or drawing-rooms of Europe. His conduct is the last word in the art of *savoir-faire*. Everywhere in social circles, he is liked and admired, for his agreeable personality;—not for the fact that he has proven himself a great General.

"Secondly, on the diplomatic side;—if he had not possessed the most consummate skill, he never would have been able to secure for the American soldiers, the privilege of fighting in units in aggregated divisions,—at the time when the other allied military chieftains were decided upon a policy of segregation of the American forces, as an expedient means of affiliating the newly arrived, inexperienced soldiers, with those of greater experience and longer practice in the activities of war.

"And the fact that General Pershing retained his command, is also a tribute to his diplomacy, as well as to his military genius.

"And now, since I want to make my Hero-General a four-square man, I will say thirdly, that on the business side, he has proven himself to be a business man with a business plan,—because he took many poorly organized units in the Army and organized them on a proper and efficient basis. He managed, by every ingenious process at his command, to obtain the supplies, equipment and munitions necessary for the American Expeditionary Forces. He introduced methods of sanitation into the French economic system, without which the physical discomfort, both to the French and American

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soldiers, would have been far in excess of that which they experienced in the latter days of the war.

“And to complete the fourth side of the square, I may add that the military results, so well known to us both,—and to all the world, for that matter,—speak clearly for themselves, without need of repetition or amplification.”

“I believe your claims for the General have not been in the least exaggerated. I think it is unfortunate, however, that in his public addresses he indicates a certain degree of self-consciousness, which detracts from the power of his spoken words. He is not at his best as a speaker; but history will make allowance for this;—and in the final analysis, I believe, with you, that General Pershing will retain his laurels as well if not better, than any other man connected with the recent war. At least, he has contributed an imperishable legacy to the traditions and institutions of the United States, which shall guarantee to him an immortal place in the annals of our country.”

“I have heard,” said Maxine, “that certain influential financiers in the United States have volunteered to organize a preliminary Presidential campaign, on behalf of General Pershing; and that when he was consulted about it, he was told that ample funds would be forthcoming for the purpose of arranging public receptions for him in every large, American city, when he returns to the United States,—that he may become more intimately known to the great mass of the American people, in the event that he entertains the idea of permitting himself to become a prospective Presidential candidate.

“His answer was that he only wished to complete the work of successfully settling the affairs of the American Expeditionary Forces, which come properly under his juris-

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diction, and that he would not go up and down the country, upon his return to the United States, apparently seeking a reward for having done that which, in his own mind, constituted only his simple duty."

"That is true modesty; — true greatness," commented Henry. "It is indeed regrettable that the General has not been better understood by the average soldier, — for I believe that next to the country-at-large, General Pershing was interested in the private soldier more than in anything or anybody else, in connection with the war.

"He has known pain and suffering and real heart sorrow, and I believe these experiences have softened his natural sympathies to a greater degree than most of the men in the ranks realize."

"Yes, and he was proud of the standard of morale of the American soldiers; and counted it his greatest responsibility to do all in his power to maintain and sustain that morale," volunteered Maxine.

"Yes, and that is the most important thing, by far, in the life and work of an army, — morale lost, all is lost." Henry continued.

"Of course, you have heard that the French soldiers believed that Joan of Arc fought with them at the first Battle of the Marne; — that she was with them, helping them to win, from the very first. I have been told, by many of the poilus, who were there, that a few days before they struck back on the German center and hurled, against the Prussians their unexpected army on the left, that the French were almost totally discouraged and encompassed by their own fears to the point of despair, — when suddenly, there appeared before them, the white, angelic figure of a slender girl, — mounted on a snow-white palfrey. The girl, as she

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passed, merely looked to the right and left with searching eyes of deep penetration; first, as if to question if it could be possible that anyone present lacked either hope or courage; and then, her questioning glance changed to one of tenderest pity and compassion, then, quickly again, her whole countenance was illuminated as if by Divine light, as the emanations and radiance from her spiritual face seemed to inspire directly, as if by Divine guidance, every officer and soldier in the ranks.

“Immediately there followed the very swift, brilliant counter-attack of the French, which resulted in the German right flank’s losing its cohesion and the original German plan of the war to take Paris and crumple the entire French Army back upon itself, — was destroyed.

“The French poilus have told me, many times that they know that the figure on the magic, white palfrey was that of Joan of Arc, who came to breathe inspiration to them at the crucial moment of their despair; and that it was her spirit which led them to victory again, as she had done in the days when France crippled the English power.

“So many have told me of having seen this vision that, personally, I do not doubt it.

“In fact, I do not believe that anything or anybody ever dies; but I do believe that the spirits who have gone on will always help us to fight our battles and meet our Calvaries, if we will only let them.

“I believe they are as close to us, in point of proximity, as the flowers; and that we may breathe their very presence, if we but will. I believe they talk to us, in our thoughts, and express themselves in our actions.

“No one is dead; no, that can not be. All life is perpetual in the final reckoning of things,” concluded Henry.

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“Your words remind me of an old song,” said Maxine, as she walked toward the piano. Then she played an improvised accompaniment, while she sang:

“ ‘When you are gone; and I am left alone;
Just send an angel down and I will come;
Oh, do not leave me to live without thee’.”

“That is a very sweet song. I have always believed that you talked with angels; and now I feel sure of it. I feel so grateful for all that you have done for me,” said Henry, thoughtfully.

“Your appreciation is a great reward, — all the reward that I seek,” responded Maxine.

Then she went on: “I saw Colonel Hinckley today and I had an opportunity to speak with him alone, while we were out at Clignancourt. I talked to him again about you, and he gave me definite assurance that he would give you a commission and send you, as a First Lieutenant, into the Army of Occupation, if you desire to go. He will recommend you and put the matter through right away, if you want him to,” suggested Maxine.

“No,” replied Henry, “Not at this late date—after the fighting is all over. I haven’t much interest in men who secure their promotion after the danger is past, although I know that a great many commissions are being granted, and that numerous promotions are being made right now. I would have liked to go back to Texas, especially to my mother, wearing the insignia of an officer; — but since I was not so fortunate as to win these laurels while the fighting was on, I will not accept them, through your influence, now,

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although you know that I appreciate your efforts none the less."

"I know just how you feel about it. However, when the time comes for you to be demobilized, which you think will be very soon now, I am going to suggest to Colonel Hinckley that he shall take you home on the same ship with him. He really needs a secretary, because he has been requested to furnish so many lengthy reports to the War Department. You could help him out beautifully, and it would be much better for you to go home this way, than it would be for you to go back through the ordinary channels of demobilization."

"You are very thoughtful, always thinking of something for me. I think though that if I return to the United States with the Colonel, I would undoubtedly go along as his orderly, although I might perform secretarial duties, at the same time. If he wants me to go with him, I will be very glad to have him make a requisition for my services in any way which suits his convenience," replied Henry.

"Very well, I will see about it, directly. After you go home, I am going up to the Army of Occupation for awhile," said Maxine.

"Oh, you are! Well, perhaps if I had known that I would have felt differently about being sent to Germany myself," laughingly remarked Henry.

"No, you've made your decision now, and I think you will have to stand by it," answered Maxine, in a rather teasing manner.

"I suppose so. Well, I don't approve of a vacillating course of conduct, anyway."

"In any event, I think that it will be a mutual advantage for you and the Colonel to know each other. He was born in Missouri, literally, as well as figuratively, speaking.

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He is a regular army man, a graduate of West Point. It is his understanding that he is to receive an assignment, which will transfer him from Washington, D. C. to the State of Missouri, where he believes he may, eventually, retire from the army and enter politics. There is a good deal of brisk, popular journalism in his make-up. He told me that, had he not entered the army, he would have taken up newspaper work, so I know you will enjoy knowing him."

Within a fortnight, Colonel Hinckley sailed for the United States. Henry went with him.

The day after they sailed from Brest, Maxine received the following letter, which was delivered to her by one of the couriers, a friend of Henry, who brought the mail from that port to Paris.

Dear Maxine:

We are just about to go aboard the *Imperator*. Although I am traveling as the Colonel's orderly, he treats me as well, if not better, than he does, his son.

You remember that he had young Hinckley promoted to the rank of Major, a short time ago.

Well, we had a very amusing, but rather nerve-racking experience, before we caught our train in Paris. After we said good-bye to you at Clignancourt, the Colonel told the driver to take him to a number out near the Elysees Palace. It seems that this was the residence of Georgette Jarvis, a prominent French woman, who is, in reality, Colonel Hinckley's sweetheart. Through her influence with the French Government, the Legion of Honor was recently awarded to Colonel Hinckley. She gave

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generously of her funds, and her own personal services, to the French Red Cross, during the war. The Colonel fell very much in love with her, when she took care of him, after he was wounded at Chemin des Dames. He regrets very much that he can not take her back to America with him, but since he has a wife in Washington, D. C., this is out of the question. It took him about three quarters of an hour to say good-bye to her. To complicate matters for him, some busybody, who returned to the United States ahead of him, reported to Mrs. Hinckley, that he was desperately in love with a French woman. When the War Department made a ruling recently, which permits the wives of officers to go to France, the Colonel was thrown into a state of perturbation and consternation. That was why he cabled Mrs. Hinckley so soon, that he was coming home. Judging from his conversation with his son, and incidentally, with myself, since he has given me his confidence rather freely, — I don't envy him his happiness when he meets his wife again.

Now, I must tell you about the excitement which preceded the catching of our train, before we left Paris. As we started to drive away from Madame Jarvis' home, suddenly, it occurred to Major Hinckley that he had forgotten his Service papers. Of course, you know that he could not go aboard any ship, sailing for home, without these documents. The Colonel knew that he had taken too much time in farewells, and no doubt, lamentations, when he left Miss Jarvis, — so, when he found

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that his son had forgotten the one thing which was all-important, he cursed him up and down.

We drove through the streets of Paris at a maddening, dangerous pace, with little hope that we could return to Clignancourt and secure the necessary papers before our train would leave. The Colonel was terribly upset, because he knew that missing our train would mean a delay of, perhaps, two or three weeks, before he could get another sailing, because steamship space is at such a premium now.

We drove as fast as any French taxi driver ever thinks of going, and you know, that is driving some. Well, suffice to say, we made our train, but in doing so, I can assure you that we risked our lives as much, if not more, than we ever risked them upon the battlefield.

The Colonel's arm is still lame, — you know, this was the result of a wound in the shoulder which he received at Chateau Thierry. He has had a beautiful Red Cross Danish nurse for some time, before he left Paris. She has almost cured his arm, by the use of massage, and I know, from what he says, that he is going to miss her. However, I have volunteered to rub his arm with alcohol every night before he retires. I am also going to help him, about his Army Reports, as he has a great many of them to make out on the way home.

Altogether, I think that we will get along fine. He is real human, generous and kind, and I appreciate that it is entirely due to your good offices that I know him.

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Let me thank you once more for the many, many wonderful things which you have done for me, — the greatest of which was your helping me to make a firm resolve to live in such a way that I shall be able to express in action whatever ability I may have, and to apply to my daily living, the splendid, constructive, optimistic philosophy with which you have inspired me.

You know it has been aptly said that when anyone makes us think well of themselves, we admire them; when anyone makes us think well of ourselves, we love them.

I trust that you will see this analogy.

Faithfully yours always,

Henry.

“Bless his heart,” she thought. “I must have a letter ready to send to him before I go to Germany.”

That night she left for Coblenz. She spent about a month in the American, British and French Armies of Occupation. In the American area, she spoke to the soldiers on the subject of their future opportunities in civilian life. Six weeks from the date on which Henry sailed, Maxine, herself, was bound for the United States.

CHAPTER XX

Home Again

MARY ANN and Argus stood on the dock at Hoboken. They were waiting for the Rotterdam to land. It was late in August, — a sultry, depressing, uncomfortable day, if one's feelings and general mental barometer were to be gauged by the weather. On the other hand, if the mind was filled with joyous anticipation, the discomfort experienced was in very small proportion to the exuberance which ensued, when the gratifying expectation was realized.

Argus wagged his tail gleefully. He knew, in his dog-heart, that something interesting, and perhaps, even exciting, was going to happen. While he was thus indulging himself, in his canine prelibations, suddenly, his eyes caught sight of his old friend and benefactress, — Maxine. Then, his overjoyed spirit at once released itself. He wagged his tail with a highly increased rate of vibration. He went just as close to the railing as he could get, and then waited patiently for his one-time mistress, — the first woman who had ever really loved him, — to come down the gang-plank. It seemed like an age before she appeared, — and then his demonstrations equalled in vigor and effusiveness those which he had made in honor of his master, when Richard Radcliffe arrived at the end of that memorable, transcontinental journey, when he had responded to that distant cry of distress, which summoned him to Argus' side.

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Although Mary Ann was a well-poised creature, she made no effort to restrain her emotions now. She could neither hold back the tears, nor control the great, out-bursting joy which she felt, when she took Maxine closely to her heart and embraced her, with as much fondness and tenderness, as even a devoted mother could have expressed.

"I did not let Mr. Radcliffe know that you were coming home so soon. I thought that if you wanted him to know it, you would cable him, yourself. Just at present he is out West on business. He left about two weeks ago, but I don't believe that he intends to be gone very long. He came out to see Argus, the night before he went," explained Mary Ann, as soon as they were comfortably seated in a taxi, which was to transport them on a ferry to New York.

"You did perfectly right. I received a letter from him, only the day before I sailed, stating that he was leaving for the Coast, on important business. I did not cable him, because I knew that if I did, he would change his plans, which might cause him some inconvenience," answered Maxine.

Maxine had cabled to no one, except Mary Ann, in advance of her arrival; but as soon as she landed, she sent telegraphic night letters to both Henry and Richard.

The following day, about noon, she received both replies in the form of day letters.

Henry's read:

WELCOME HOME. YOU WILL FIND SEVERAL LETTERS WAITING FOR YOU. I PLAN ON TAKING A REPORTORIAL POSITION ON A NEW YORK NEWSPAPER IN SEPTEMBER. THE EDITOR OF WACO PAPER IS ARRANGING THIS. AM KEEN TO KNOW YOUR PLANS BUT HOPE YOU DECIDE TO REMAIN IN NEW YORK THIS WINTER.

HENRY.

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Maxine had already received the letters to which Henry referred. All of them emphasized that he had determined to go in strong for a journalistic career, with the possibility of developing his abilities and expanding his interests to such a degree that he should be fitted in the future for a career of public usefulness. He always spoke of his appreciation of Maxine's interest in him; and of the deep gratitude which he felt for the help which she had given him.

"I esteem gratitude to be the finest flower which grows in the garden of all the virtues, and I indulge myself in the hope that I shall never be found lacking in this most essential attribute of character," were the final words of his last letter.

Richard's telegram was as follows:

YOUR JOY AT BEING IN THE UNITED STATES AGAIN IS ONLY EXCEEDED BY MY OWN. WHY DID YOU NOT CABLE ME, SO THAT I COULD HAVE MET YOU ON THE ARRIVAL OF YOUR STEAMER? I SHALL START EAST AS SOON AS I HEAR YOUR PLANS. MEANWHILE BE GOOD TO YOURSELF. RICHARD.

The ever thoughtful, but practical Richard, had expressed a heart full in just fifty words.

Maxine wanted to see Richard again, but she was no nearer to committing herself by promises to him, than she had been when she sailed for France, nearly seventeen months before. In fact, in her own mind, she was not so near to a final decision as she had been a few weeks before her departure.

She knew that the war had brought about some mental changes within her. She was no exception to the great universal law of change, which had wrought its work on multitudes of men and women, who had engaged in war

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activities. No one could have played a part in that great, unparalleled conflict, without experiencing some transition of ideals and character.

No matter how remote one may have been from the center of things; no matter how infinitesimal or how great a factor one may have been, in that world-wide conflagration, everyone who engaged himself, or herself, in any civilian or military service appendaged to the war, was destined to undergo, in some degree, a change of mind and heart.

This is a compensating reward for those who are called upon to take the hazardous chances, and assume the perilous risks of war and its destruction. No one who lends his or her whole-hearted efforts in such a world-stirring cause, can remain provincial.

The boy who previous to his service in the world war had never been farther away from home than the county seat, will always have a tincture of the cosmopolite about him. He will see things with a different vision. He will comprehend with a broader outlook.

The trained nurse, whose entire experience had been confined mostly to the homes of peace and the well-to-do will feel that her time spent in the service of her country has enlarged her sympathies and enfolded her capacity for community interests.

The mother, who gave her all, knows that there is something so much bigger to give than to give merely one's self.

The father, whose father before him had fought in the Civil War to save the privileges of freedom and liberty for his son, knows now that he has sent his own son forth to fight, to save him again; but what is more important, he knows that his son has fought to save the privileges of Democracy, for the young, idolized grandson.

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The brother and sister realize that the Gold Star hanging above the mantel means that some one fell that they might be saved, and that, if they do their duty, they will pass on a spirit of appreciation and unselfishness which shall enlarge itself like an encircled pebble, thrown into the ocean, until it shall become an accelerated force for a constructive, permanent peace.

The girl, whose sweetheart heard the clarion call of death, knows that there is something in the great scheme of things, which calls to us louder than our own selfish desire for human happiness, and the gratification of human wants.

Indeed, there never could be a permanent peace of mind and soul, without the inner conflict of the sensual and the selfish against the divine and the spiritual, in all of us.

Disastrous as the awful consequences of war have been, who shall say that the heights of progress in the evolution of civilization could have been achieved, without the slaughter, bloodshed and sacrifices of war?

As humanity turns its efforts in the direction of the achievement of a permanent world peace, it will know the discipline of mind and character, which it has attained, through the processes of war; and it will be better prepared to initiate and develop the progressive, constructive pursuits of peace, for there will be, necessarily, much sacrifice in the achievement of peace, — only the sacrifices contributory to, and involved in the processes of peace will be economic, rather than military.

We shall have to rebuild our institutions, — our social organizations must be remade by gradual processes; our industrial fabric must be rewoven; our educational systems remodelled and revised, on a more practical working basis; our political structure must needs be re-invigorated; and our

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humanitarianism must learn to function so efficiently that philanthropy will be eliminated by a self-respecting civilization, which shall look upon our so-called charities as a relic of a partially civilized age, which because of its own deficiencies was preyed upon by social parasites.

Indeed, every charitable organization and benevolent institution is an indictment of our social system; but such societies can not be dispensed with until they have outgrown their usefulness; and they can never do this, until a more vigorous, progressive, economic social order shall establish new standards and create stronger incentives, which shall encourage and inspire all members of society to make superlative efforts for themselves.

When this time comes, order will come out of chaos, and we shall have peace instead of war.

Yes, the late war had changed us all. Maxine admitted to herself that she, like the others, had changed. She did not feel quite sure just what her own mind would be, and what her heart would say, when she saw Richard again. She could only tell when the time came. Would Richard have changed, too? If he had not changed, then he would press her for a decision, as he had never done before. Had she herself really changed, as much as she thought? Or, when she saw Richard again, would all the old love for him inflame her soul, as it had in the early days of their unconventional relationship?

After all, would she not be a little disappointed if Richard really had changed in his sentiment toward her? Would she really want to live, forever, without him? All these questions Maxine asked herself, over and over again, before she answered Richard's night letter.

She assured him in her message that she was planning on spending the winter in New York, engaging herself in profes-

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sional writing, as several publishers had solicited her contributions, both for magazine and book publication. She would, however, be delighted to see him whenever he found it convenient to come to New York.

Within ten days, Richard Radcliffe had put his affairs in such condition that he could be in the great metropolis.

Maxine met him first for a dinner engagement at the Hotel Belmont.

"When you left you looked so good to me that I did not think you could ever improve yourself.

"You've not only held your own, but you have, — well, damn it, I must say, you look the best I ever saw you, — you bewitching, enchanting Circe, — only you are different from Circe, in that you gain your power from the help of good spirits and not evil ones," said Richard, directly after they were seated at the table.

"Now, there you go; you know very well that you always over-estimated me. Now, let us talk of something else," suggested Maxine.

"No, I have never estimated you at your true value, until I had to live, from day to day, without seeing you. Then I found out how utterly barren and dreary, life was without you," Richard assured her.

"I'm sure that after this long absence, you are going to please me, by talking about something besides myself," answered Maxine.

"All right. Tell me whether you have missed me. I want to know about that," said Richard.

"Of course, I've missed you. How could I help it? Do you think that I could leave an appreciative Pal like yourself, for more than a year, without missing you?

"Yes, I have actually been homesick for you, many times.

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“Often did I think of you, when I needed you to encourage me in my work, and then, too, I needed you to make me laugh. Whenever I had an amusing experience, I always missed the opportunity of not being able to tell you about it. For instance, one morning when I was in Dijón, I asked for a bath towel, in what I thought was perfectly good French, and they brought me a cocktail—at least, something which tasted very much like one.”

Richard laughed heartily.

“Now, tell me a good story. I’m just hungry for one of your stories,” Maxine insisted.

“Well, let’s see. There is a fellow in Mount Olympic, who has a fish market. In the window, he had a sign, which read: ‘Fresh fish sold here.’ A customer came along and said to him: ‘What do you have the word “Here” there for? You aren’t selling them anywhere else, are you?’ In a little while, another customer came along, and said: ‘What do you have the word “Sold” in the sign for? You aren’t giving them away, are you?’ So he removed both the words ‘Here’ and ‘Sold’. Very soon, another man entered the market. ‘What do you have that word “Fresh” there for? You aren’t selling any stale fish, are you?’ So the man who had the fish to sell, took the word ‘Fresh’ down. In a few minutes more, the fourth customer came into the store. ‘What in Hell do you have that word “Fish” there for, when you can smell them for four blocks away?’ he ejaculated, furiously.”

“That’s very good. I told a great many of your stories, during my talks to the boys in France,” replied Maxine. “And I can tell you now that they always brought a laugh.”

“Of course, I’m anxious to hear all about your work over there, but I don’t suppose that you want to talk about it. They say that very few people, who have served in France,

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care to talk of their experiences. But tell me, what did you think of our Ninety-First Division?"

"They were a noble, God-given body of men. Just think, they had been only a few weeks on French soil and were scarcely acclimated, when they were hurled into action in that awful wilderness of underbrush, and barbed wire, and threatening death.

"I spoke to several hundred of those boys, twenty-four hours before they went to the front, to face grim death. As I looked into their faces, I knew that they could not lose. I could read in their eyes, the cool nerve; the unconquerable spirit; the Punch which enabled them to face, fearlessly, the advancing Boche, from three sides.

"And looking more deeply into their determined countenances, I could read even more. They seemed to say: 'Yes, tomorrow night, at this time, many of us will be gone; but death is nothing. To die with honor is such an enviable victory; you shall have no reason, either here or back in the United States, to be anything but proud of us.

" 'Those of us who go, shall have the privilege of joining those brave souls, who have preceded us, and we shall unite with them to return and reinforce those who remain to continue the great struggle.

" 'Indeed, we shall help them to the end. They shall know no defeat, for our myriad numbers and mighty hosts, shall assist them from on High, until the final victory is won.' "

"Yes, that was a tremendous victory," echoed Richard. "In the very first thrust, the American Divisions were pitted against the crack Division of the German Army, — the First Prussian Guards.

"It was the furious attack of our own Pine Tree boys

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that drove back the Prussians, until they were out of line with the other German Divisions. Within four days, our boys reached their objective, and won the attention and applause of an astonished world," concluded Richard, with pride.

"Yes, you have every reason to rejoice at the fighting spirit born of the rugged mountains and the noble pines. It saved the day at Epinonville, Very, Eclis Fontaine, Gesnes, and Landrecourt!"

"You have done a work of inestimable value, Maxine, and some time, when you feel more in the mood than you do now, I want you to tell me more about it; but, just at present, I have something else on my mind," said Richard.

"Well, what is it?" inquired Maxine.

"Tell me," said Richard, as he bent forward over the table in the Belmont dining-room, and looked searchingly, into Maxine's lovely blue eyes, "has there been any one else? Is there any one else?" he asked timidly.

"Well," she said, rather self-consciously and evasively, "no one has taken your place, if that is what you mean. No one could do that." And her eyes fell.

"No, I mean,—If I must make my question more pointed, have you been interested in any one in particular, since you went away?"

Just then, the waiter brought the salad, and Richard, who was the most immaculate of men, with the courtliest of manners, drew his right sleeve through the Thousand Island dressing, and looked as embarrassed as a school boy, trying to find out, if his girl-sweetheart has had another beau.

"Well, yes, in a way," replied Maxine, equivocally.

"In a way," he repeated, thoughtfully, his voice rising. "Well, just what does that mean?" he inquired, smilingly. "Do you want to tell me who it was, — and in what way you

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were interested?" queried Richard, with his true sense of delicacy, now that he had discovered that there was another man on earth, who had come in for any part of Maxine's thought and attention.

"Well, I met a young man, now only twenty-six years of age on his last birthday,—just a boy, you know,—but a very dear boy, with a very earnest purpose in life,—a splendid education and, well, more than his share of natural ability for comprehending world situations and big things.

"Our mutual interests co-ordinated and, well,—we have just been very good friends,—the best of friends,—that's all."

"Oh, I see!" said Richard. "I knew when you went away that you would never escape receiving the attention and genuine heart-interest of some keen-minded man; but I did not think it would be one younger than yourself."

"Why not?" questioned Maxine.

"Because a woman of your versatility of mind and accomplishments should help some worthy, ambitious man of experience to round out a career of usefulness and distinction, where it will be possible for you to share his rewards and honors; instead of giving your energy and time to a young man, who is only building his foundation.

"In such a circumstance, as that to which you have just referred, where a young man has his future before him, to make and to build, an older woman who marries him, if she is energetic and ambitious, will work to the full capacity of her strength; and in the end, as a rule, some other younger woman comes into his life and shares with him his final success and triumphs."

Maxine knew that Richard had spoken the truth, so far

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as the majority of cases were concerned, where the woman in the partnership was older than the man.

Then she spoke impressively.

“Why, Richard, — you are jumping to conclusions. I have said nothing to indicate that I have given my heart to this young man. You pre-suppose too much, — entirely too much.”

“Do I? Well then, I am very glad, if it is not yet serious.

“Let us adjourn to the mezzanine floor. I did not get theatre tickets tonight, because I thought we would both want to give ourselves over to conversation, after this long separation.”

“You were quite right,” said Maxine. “I should have been disappointed if you had planned to take in any amusements.”

On the parlor floor, in a secluded corner, by themselves, Maxine re-introduced the subject, which they had last discussed at the dinner table.

“You know, Richard,” she said, half apologetically, “I could not be away for so long and endure the strain and the awful monotony of the last few months of the war, and the Armistice period, without some diversion, — and this young man, — well, he made himself so agreeable that I could not refuse his company.”

“I understand,” said Richard. “You owe me no apologies.

“I wanted you to find whatever amusement you could, over there. You needed diversion to relieve the tension of your strenuous work, and I am glad that this young man brought you the right kind of pastime.”

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“And now then,” said Maxine, half-laughingly, “didn’t you have any little play-mate, while I was gone?”

This question was a surprise to Richard, but he was a man who always had himself well in hand.

“No, — not really,” he replied, as he seemed fairly to paw the air for words.

“Now, go on and tell me just how flirtatious and wayward you have been,” she said.

“My experience, as you say of your own, has been nothing at all serious. The head of the Red Cross in our city, Mrs. Denton Bates, is a very charming, sensible woman. When I was back in Mount Olympic, she called on me for some assistance, in connection with her work, and of course, I was glad to give her all the help that I could.

“Mrs. Bates’ husband is a man thirty years older than herself; very inactive, and completely out of things, so to speak.

“Well, — she and I were, somehow, — thrown a great deal into each other’s society, — especially in the work of conducting a campaign to secure funds for the Red Cross, — and well, — we had just a little flirtation; — that was all.”

“I’m very glad, indeed, Richard, that you found some one who entertained you and saved you from being bored, although I can never imagine your growing tired of yourself, because you have so many resources within yourself, and such a saving sense of humor. Then, too, you invariably think of some thing worth while.”

“Now there, Maxine! You always have thought and said such pretty, artistic things about my thinking, as well as my actions. Just now, I have a really wicked thought.”

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“If it isn’t too wicked, may I know what it is?” she inquired.

“Yes, but before I tell you, I shall have to preface my statement, by a story.

“I think that I must have erred somewhere in seeking your favor, otherwise, this young Texan would not have engaged your interest, to such a degree.

“I remind myself of the story of a colored soldier, who always feared being sent ‘over the top.’

“One day, he said to his Major: ‘I just knows that every time I goes over dat top, it’s gwine to be the las’ time for poor Rastus.’

“ ‘Now, Rastus,’ said the Major, ‘you know when you go toward the firing line, you must never proceed in a straight line. You must always approach the front line, by going Zig-Zag, — Zig-Zag, — Zig-Zag, — so!’ — and he illustrated to Rastus, the method which the latter should use.

“ ‘Within a month, the Major found Rastus in a hospital, badly wounded; battered and torn, from his feet to his head. As the Major approached Rastus’ cot, he found the languishing, colored man wrapped in bandages, and moaning with pain.

“ ‘Why, Rastus,’ he exclaimed, ‘you don’t mean to say that after all my instructions to you, that you went straight toward the firing-line! Why didn’t you Zig-Zag, as I told you to do?’

“ ‘Yes, Majah,’ he said, ‘I shuah did Zig-Zag. But the trouble was, I zigged where I ought to zagged, and I zagged where I ought to zigged.’

“I think that has been the way that I have done, — I have zigged where I should have zagged, and zagged where I

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should have zigged. But the really wicked thought, to which I referred, is comprised in this:

“I would like, at this moment, to carry you away surreptitiously where that Texan could never see you again.

“I wish I had the right to do so; or that you would say the words, which would authorize me to proceed to establish that right for myself, by legal processes.”

“Richard, I had hoped that, perhaps, during my absence you and Eleanor would come together again;—because I can not yet bring myself to the conclusion that it would ever work out right, if I were to make myself the cause of a permanent disunion between you and your wife,” said Maxine.

“Well, my matrimonial situation is the most tragic event in my life,” said Richard, referring to his domestic affairs, for the first time that evening.

“It is indeed pathetic,” he continued. “I admit that at times, my heart is so wounded by the hopelessness of it all, — and by my apparent powerlessness to change matters, that I am engulfed by despair.

“After you went to France and I returned home, Eleanor made every possible effort, which a woman of pride and breeding could consistently make, to win back my affections.

“Knowing that you felt as you did when you went away, I tried as much as my heart would permit me, for your sake, as well as Eleanor’s, — to respond to her renewed efforts; but it was to no purpose.

“Now, I believe that Eleanor realizes that it is an irremediable disaster, — that our marriage, from the first, has been a mistake. I must do her the justice of saying, however, that she has wrought almost a complete transformation in her disposition, — but some way, there has been erected an insurmountable barrier between us, which prevents our meeting on

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the common ground of mutual interest, compatibility and affection."

"Richard, do you really mean that it is so hopeless as all that?" inquired Maxine.

"I believe it is. When affection is once subjected to a strain for any cause, it can seldom be restored. Affection is only elastic, when it bounds forward. It loses its elasticity on the rebound.

"It can not batter against the waves of a storm-tossed ship of mis-spent years and unhappiness.

"A wrecked married life is just about as hopeless as a drowning man, who has gone down for the third time; — and many married men and women have gone down for the third time, too, on the ship of matrimonial despair, in their first married venture.

"The only saving feature of their ship-wrecked situation is that they have not sunk in the turbulent sea of discord three times in rapid succession. Between times, they emerge to live, to go on hoping that somewhere, somehow, sometime, the flower of love and romance will bud and bloom for them perpetually.

"But alas! — for most of us, this flower never comes to us in its full perfection of bloom. It is like the elusive rainbow; — it exhibits all the brilliant lustre and attraction of all the virtues and enticements to happiness, — but when we reach out for it, — it disappears.

"I have hoped ever since you went away, that you would return, and that I would find my rainbow to be real, — unlike all the others, which I have seen and of which I have read and heard.

"Now, tell me, — do you really like that Texan, or have you just been teasing me a little?" inquired Richard, earnestly.

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“As I told you, Richard, neither of us is serious. We are good friends, — very good friends.

“But if you had been an entirely free man, I presume I would not have permitted myself to become so much interested in young Mr. Strong as I did.”

“Very well,” said Richard. “I see that I must continue to pursue my rainbow, still hoping to find all its alluring beauty and golden pots of precious treasures at the end. However, all the treasure which I want it to contain is a wealth of affection and devotion.”

Richard spent about a month in New York. He and Maxine took in all the best theatrical attractions, including the liveliest, musical comedies. They dined together, frequently, both at her apartment and in the best down-town restaurants.

Richard's own business interests, as well as those of Worthington-Hargreaves, demanded that he should wind up his affairs in his Washington and New York offices, and return to the Pacific Coast. His services were no longer necessary to the Government, as he had terminated, most successfully, his administrative career in the department which he had so efficiently managed.

In commenting upon his resignation from the Federal Office, which he had held, he said to Maxine: “I anticipate now, that the Government ought to be able to diminish its expenses considerably, — since so many of the Dollar-A-Year men have resigned. Personally, I am behind several hundred thousand dollars, because of the time which I have given to the country. I mean by that, — that if I had used this time, for the purpose of increasing my own fortune, I could have added a substantial sum to it. As it is, however, I have more than any man really needs, — especially, if he has no children to

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inherit his property. I do not regret anything which I have done to help Uncle Sam to win this war. I shall always look back upon it, as the redeeming feature of what might otherwise have been, a rather selfish, money-getting career," Richard concluded.

"No, your sense of justice, love for mankind and country, have always been superior to any thought of yourself, or your own ambitions," quickly answered Maxine.

When Richard left for the West, he carried in his mind an imprint of Maxine's oft-repeated words, in the last few conversations between them:

"We shall see; — we shall only have to wait, and watch and see. Let us hope for the end, which will be best for all of us, — for you and me, — and for her."

CHAPTER XXI

Separated Pals

“**B**ILL, here’s that young fellow from Texas, I was telling you about! Take him on and put him through.” Such were the instructions given by the Managing Editor of a big New York Daily. He was speaking to his City Editor, — a rather nonchalant, short, stocky man, whose discerning eyes, shielded by a green shade, quickly took in the physiognomy of the Texan.

“There is to be a yacht race on Long Island Sound today. It is somewhat late in the season for it; but there are several prominent New York men, who have yachts entered, — so I’m going to send you down there to get the story,” remarked the City Editor, casually, so casually, in fact, that Henry wondered whether the Editor knew that he had given him a very trying assignment. As a matter of fact, Henry had never seen, — at close range, — a real, Honest-to-Heaven yacht. He had never been to Galveston but once, and besides, very few Texans owned yachts. Whenever a Texan accumulated sufficient wealth for such a luxury, and could afford the leisure for such a pastime, he generally moved to New York. Henry had seen scows, yawls, — all kinds of flat-bottomed boats, with broad square ends; sail-boats, schooners, barges and steam-boats. He would not have dreaded to write a story about a prairie schooner, because he had heard his father tell many tales of the huge, canvas-covered wagons, which were used

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in early days by emigrants crossing the prairies. But, when it came to the matter of writing up a yacht race, — well, nothing could have been more dreadful or formidable at the very beginning of his metropolitan newspaper career. It was the only time in his life when he had actually been fearful of anything; but there was nothing else to do, but to go ahead and face the music.

He arrived at Northport just in time to witness the preliminary enthusiasm which always precedes such occasions, where real Commodores sail beautiful, white-winged craft in noteworthy cup races.

In the interesting group of reporters, were men of all ages and all kinds of experience. They were ready at the moment to record every incident of interest, — trained to the game so well that the most trifling circumstance did not escape their attention. With the exception of Henry, these newspaper men had all seen many years of service.

Henry stood, for a moment, by the side of a gray-headed man, who looked to be a very representative journalist. He glanced at Henry, and immediately sized the latter up for a green-horn.

After an inter-change of some rather commonplace remarks, the mild-mannered, thoroughly sophisticated reporter said:

“Well, my boy, if you are new at this business, and you need a tip, or a line, come along with me.”

Much to Henry's delight, his newly-made friend proved to be a close associate of Beverly Woodstock, who owned one of the most magnificent looking vessels of state. The older man took Henry aboard this sylph-like, gorgeous craft, which made its way through the water with such graceful ease and exciting speed that it soon out-distanced the bulkier, more

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massive vessels. Henry's elation of spirits, over the easy victory, was scarcely exceeded by the joy of the owner himself.

So much first-hand information from the 'inside' afforded an abundance of material for a raw, inexperienced cub. Henry went back to town in the company of his recently found benefactor. When he turned in his story the Managing Editor concealed his surprise, and only gave a grunt in acknowledgment.

It was to Maxine that Henry first went, to relate the story of his initial achievement. He wanted someone to tell him just how well he had done, and Maxine was a past master in the art of praising sincerely, but not fulsomely, the successful efforts of others.

The mutual interests of Maxine and Henry became more earnest and intensified, as they continued to share the same tastes and cherish ideals, which satisfied the standards of both of them.

They were both writing now, and although, Henry was only a reporter, many of his daily experiences were of much interest to Maxine, who kept herself very busy preparing manuscripts to meet the requisitions of editors and publishers.

Maxine extended to Henry her old-time hospitality, and he found himself dining with her very frequently, — either at her apartment when he was her guest, or at a down-town hotel, where he always acted as host to Maxine.

Henry made his home with a matron on University Hill, who had filled her house with post-graduate students of Columbia University.

He was very anxious to broaden his associations, and enlarge his points of contact, socially. While he had the most genteel manners, and was an agreeable and versatile conversationalist, he was thoroughly unsophisticated, so far as the at-

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mosphere of cosmopolitan drawing-rooms, was concerned. Again, Maxine proved to be his helpful and constant adviser. She knew many of the most influential men and women in New York,—to many of whom she introduced Henry.

It did not take him long to learn that when he attended a piffing Pink Tea, he had only to pay pretty compliments to the mothers of the young debutantes, to win for himself enviable attention and invitations to call on their charming young daughters.

In his heart he was as loyal to Maxine, as on the day when he had first met her in France; but his social curiosity actuated him with a desire to go about occasionally; to which pastime, Maxine, with her usual good humor, was heartily sympathetic. It happened, that many times, Henry was invited by the younger set to places to which Maxine was not bidden. Through her introductions, he received numerous invitations into many of the homes of those noted in the Blue Book and Social Register. When he went once, he was always invited again. His natural *savoir faire* carried him along on the highest crest of the social waves; although he never neglected his work, for the pleasures of society.

In the front page of his note-book, he had written this quotation from Carlyle: "Labor, wide as the Universe, has its summit in Heaven. It is the noblest thing yet discovered beneath God's skies. In idleness, alone, there is despair."

In his reportorial work, he had covered everything from railroad wrecks and murder cases to the divorces of prominent society people, and the work of political organizations. Within three months, he was promoted from his place as a reporter, to a position as special political writer, because he had shown a remarkable aptitude for gaining access to political information, by winning the confidence of the most active, prominent

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men in the public life of New York City and State. He carried on his new work so creditably, that by the time another six months had rolled around, he was, for the second time, put forward by his Managing Editor. In his new duties, he was to assume, for his newspaper, the direction of publicity in the Presidential Campaign of 1920. He had earned this preference by his unusual facility, in adapting himself to the new and tense political situation, which followed the nomination of the candidates.

He distinguished himself for his ability to secure Special Feature Political Interviews, and in getting for his paper the facts concerning the true alignment of political characters and movements several hours, — sometimes, even days and weeks, before the other papers had awakened to certain wiles and crafts and manoeuvres in the mental processes of those who figure most conspicuously in the management and control of great national campaigns.

He seemingly never stopped and never slept, when there was any possibility of getting an unusual piece of news.

On one occasion, when there was an important, political manager, who was temporarily in Washington, D. C., whom Henry knew to possess information of such a close nature that he was denying himself to all interviewers, until the proper time should arrive for giving the facts to the public, he decided to make an effort to see the party leader, before the latter should leave for the West.

The last train from New York for Washington, which would have enabled Henry to fulfill his purpose, had left, before Henry was aware that the rapidly moving political meteor was in the Capital City.

Suddenly, it occurred to Henry, that one of the couriers, whom he had known in France, was now in the aerial mail

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service, and that he was to fly a mail-plane that afternoon from Mineola, Long Island to Washington, D. C.

Henry rushed to the air mail field, arriving there just in time to be told that there was no room in the plane for him. At this instant, the pilot, who wanted to prove his willingness to serve his old-time friend, made the suggestion that Henry might lash himself to one wing of the machine.

“I know of your courage, and while I would not permit any other man, except an expert airman, to undertake this, I have no fears but that you will ‘come through’.”

The flight was at the rate of one hundred twenty miles an hour. They arrived in Washington in one hour and fifty-four minutes. Henry sent his card to the old, political warrior. On it he wrote: “I have flown on the wing of an air-plane, that I may have a few minutes of your valuable time, and a few words of your matchless, political utterance and advice.”

The strategic, political manager was so pleased by Henry’s venturesomeness and courage, that he readily acquiesced to his wishes. Henry secured an exclusive interview for his newspaper, which contained information in advance of that given to any other publicity representative, or news association, in the country.

When Henry turned in his next story, with its brilliant analysis of economic conditions, and its sage-like forecast of political events, — he was again advanced, — this time, to a very important position as editorial writer, which carried with it a state and nation-wide prestige. He continued, however, to direct the management of publicity, for the Presidential Campaign, which was now in progress.

Maxine was the first one to whom he always turned, when either good or ill fortune came to him. Indeed, he had always done this, ever since he had first known her, because if he was

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depressed, or discouraged, she always gave him just the encouragement, which he needed, and if he had met with success, in any undertaking, she always furnished him with further inspiration to continue his efforts, with unabated zeal toward a higher goal.

“I knew you could, — I knew you would distinguish yourself!” she said joyously, when Henry told her of his recent promotion.

“And now, right now, — begin your own campaign, which shall in ten, or fifteen, or twenty years, from now put you in one of the highest places, if not the most exalted place, in the United States.

“I know that you have the innate capabilities, which properly developed and practically used, will bring you the opportunity to serve your country, with all the ability, and heart, and conscience, which are your natural God-given endowments.”

Henry listened. Again Maxine was talking, and unlike many women, when she talked, she always said something; — something worth holding to; — worth remembering, — worth serious consideration.

“I am going to try, — to try my very best, for your sake, and for my mother’s sake, to fill with honor, some day, a place of great usefulness.

“And may God grant that if much power is ever given to me, that I shall not use it for the gratification, or glorification, of myself.

“I want to take for my examples the greatest national leaders, whose work I know and understand best, — our own Washington, as the founder of our great republic and the spokesman of the Non-entangling Alliance Doctrine, — the true spiritual, democrat and aristocrat, who refused to let us

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make an Empire, because with his big, noble understanding of government, he could see only democracy, as the true, guiding force of America; and in this he proved that the greatest of aristocrats are always the truest democrats.

“I want to be governed by the lofty spirit of our measureless and matchless Lincoln, who saw not himself,—who thought not of his own self-exaltation,—but who thought always of the United States;—its unity of spirit, purpose and action,—and of the importance of the continuity of our national interests and ideals.

“His greatest expressed wish that ‘government of the people, by the people and for the people, shall not perish from the earth,’ gives him the premier place, as our greatest democrat.

“Lastly, if ever I deserve to be clothed with power such as you wish for me, I hope that I may follow humbly, but confidently, the principles and teachings of the Greatest Teacher of All Mankind, who made every one in the world free, if they would but accept their freedom, by wearing the Easy Yoke of Meekness and Humility and Loving Kindness toward their fellow-creatures and their fellow-men.

“That is the supreme task of the moment; that is the great work for all of us, for all time,” concluded Henry.

“Yes, you are right; and when I think of you at twenty-seven years of age, with this vision, I am filled with higher expectations for you, than I have ever dared to entertain for anyone else.”

“You remember,” said Henry, “that I once told you that you merited a rich reward for all your unselfish interest in me.

“I have not sufficient self-assurance to be able to promise

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you such a reward, in the way of worldly honor, as I covet for you. To do so, would be the height of folly.

“You are inordinately ambitious for me. There is no question about that. And since you are ambitious for me, I am aspiring for myself. I do not know whether my ambition will out-run my talents.

“Sometimes, when you have talked to me, Maxine, about my future career, I have been just a little jealous, thinking that you thought more of the ability, which you believe I possess, than you do of me.”

“Why, Henry, do you mean what you say? I do not understand,” said Maxine, slowly.

“Forgive me, Maxine, if I have wounded you. I could give you no pain or mental anguish, without inflicting even more severe wounds and deeper heart-aches, upon myself.

“I know now that I have been too hasty; — I know that I have listened to the poisoned voice of jealousy; — jealousy of myself, — of my own limited talents. Isn’t it absurd, that a man should be jealous of himself? It is more ludicrous than pathetic, however, — really quite laughable.

“I shall never repeat this indiscretion, Maxine; this great error, — if you will forgive me for all time, for my mistake,” concluded Henry, earnestly.

“Indeed, you know that you were forgiven before you sought forgiveness. Anyway, you said nothing for which you should ask to be forgiven.

“You know that you were forgiven before you said exactly what you did, because I know now that you are really human, — and I was beginning to doubt it, when you talked so eloquently and glowingly of things Divine.”

“All right,” said Henry, “again for the ten thousandth

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time, you have earned my gratitude, by your broad-mindedness and large-heartedness."

"No, Henry, I have given you only that which you, yourself, have attracted and earned, through your own merits of character and your own big heart," said Maxine, reassuringly.

"You are the soul of generosity," said Henry, while he gazed admiringly into her soft, blue eyes. It seemed to him that her face was more radiantly expressive with soul-beauty, than he had ever seen it. Her natural, high color was pleasingly subdued, and her features artistically illumined, by the glowing light which was disseminated through a soft blue Georgette lamp-shade,—the product of Maxine's own handiwork.

"My first human impulses," continued Henry, "tell me, as you speak, to make more selfish claims for myself than the blessing of your precious friendship, which is a God-send to anyone.

"No matter what my own private opinion of myself may be, I only hope that, in your judgment, I merit and have earned, a greater reward than I have yet claimed for myself.

"Maxine," he went on, — his voice almost trembling, — "you must know that I love you, — that, — well, — that I have always loved you, since that night when, in the cold, dreary hut, 'Over There' you stood on the sod-floor, after your inspiring message to us boys, and let me talk to you.

"It seemed to me, that night, that you had been sent to me, directly from Heaven; and it has seemed so ever since."

"Henry," said Maxine, as soon as she could summon her powers of speech, "I have tried not to love you; — tried very hard not to love you, — and I am still trying. You must know why."

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“Why?” said Henry, his voice rising, with a flush of excitement.

“Because,” said Maxine, “I can not think that it is best. You seem to have forgotten, for the moment, Henry, that there is a difference of about seven years in our ages, — an ultimate handicap; an inevitable barrier to a permanently, happy marriage.”

“Why should those few years, — a mere accident of birth, — separate us for all time?” Henry questioned, impatiently.

“I know,” said Maxine. “But when you have added a few more years to your own age, you will know better what I mean.

“A woman may often times be happy with a man many years her senior, but personally, I have never known a marriage of enduring happiness, — a really, successful marriage, where the wife was as much as seven years, or more, older than her husband.

“It does not seem to be a law of nature. I am afraid to undertake it, — afraid that I should make no better success of such a nuptial contract than have scores of others, of whom I have known,” protested Maxine.

“Well, what are you afraid of?” queried Henry.

“Candidly, I am afraid that I should not always hold you. Afraid that some day, in spite of your impeccable standards of honor, that I should lose you to another woman, — a younger woman.

“You will retain your interest and masculine attractiveness long after my own few charms have become passé.”

“No, you will never lose your prime; you will never even become faded, — not in my eyes, at least. And with your

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superior mentality and exuberance of spirits, you will never, never become uninteresting.

“Your imperishable, intellectual charms and spiritual qualities will become enhanced, as your years increase,” Henry assured her.

“That is all very generous of you, but let us be frank, for a moment, painfully frank, if need be.

“Now, what would you do, Henry, with your virile, assertive personality, both physical and mental, — that is, what attitude toward me do you think you would take, if I should ever cease to interest you, so far as my physical charms are concerned?”

“Maxine, that is almost cruel. You over-estimate the importance, in my own mind, of things physical and material. I shall always aim to keep a correct balance, — a true sense of proportion, in regard to these matters.”

“I grant you that, Henry. But just yield me, for one moment, the supposition that it would be possible, years hence, for you to lose interest in me, because of the loss of my physical attractiveness.”

“Well,” said Henry, “if you want me to be frank with you, — and you say you do, — if my past observations furnish me with a true index to your character, I think that, under such circumstances as you have mentioned, that you would cultivate the friendship of any other woman in whom I became interested, — and not only that, I believe you would give me such consideration, that you would treat her most kindly and hospitably, to prevent the wagging of the tongues of gossips and scandal among the busy-bodies.”

Maxine was almost non-plussed by Henry’s frank matter-of-fact reply. She made no effort to conceal her surprise. As soon as she could resume her composure, she said:

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“I shall neither affirm nor deny the truth of your prophecy, because, of course, I do not know exactly what I would do, under such circumstances as you mention.

“You certainly predict for me a mellow, — ripe, — sweet spirit for my later years; and I appreciate your generous references to my good nature; but I think it best to dismiss the subject, without further comment, at present. Let us talk of something else.”

“It is no time to change the subject, until we have disposed of it, Maxine. I hope you do not mean to say that you consider our marriage an impossibility.”

“No,— not exactly that; but I do want to think it over very carefully. We must not make any hasty decision.

“Henry, I think it prudent that we separate for a little while. If we can survive the test of absence, without wilting, as it were, we may safely forego marriage, for the present year, at least.

“If we find the test of separation, irritating and tantalizing, then we may consider marriage.

“I have decided, since I saw you last, that I shall sign a contract with the Speakers’ Bureau, in the present Presidential Campaign.

“I am going to the Pacific Coast for a few weeks.

“Let us decide this matter, after the Campaign is over.”

“Very well. I am perfectly willing to wait upon your good pleasure,” answered Henry.

CHAPTER XXII

The Dilemma

“YOU CERTAINLY covered yourself with glory in this Campaign,” said Richard to Maxine, just after she had completed a National itinerary, in 1920.

“You do me too much honor,” she replied.

“You would not say that if you could hear all the praise and compliments, which have come to my ears, from the Political Committeemen, in whose districts you have spoken. They all tell me that you did better work than any of the men, who were sent into our State, during the Campaign; — and besides, I have some respect for my own judgment on such matters.

“You are not an extremist, and you make your appeal very effective, by basing it on the co-ordinated, aggregated interests of men and women. Therein, lies your strength. There is nothing gained by segregating men and women, as though they were different classes of citizens. I am glad to see that after all your triumphs, plaudits and honors, you remain so unaffected, simple and natural. Few women, who enter public life, keep their modesty, dignity and decorum.

“One reason why I venerate with reverence, the memory of my father, is because of the fact that he always retained his unassuming manner and dignified behavior. You know I have told you that he was, for many years, in public life.

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“I recall one of his campaigns, which occurred in my college days. William McKinley was a candidate for election as President. At that time, there were quite extensive coal mines, which were being operated in my father’s district in Indiana.

“It was a pivotal State then, as it is now, and it was extremely necessary to secure the vote of the coal-miners, in order for my father to deliver the votes to the organization, for which he was responsible. He was out of Congress then, and only took part in politics, by helping to keep his party in power.

“There was a fellow, by the name of Joe Dobbs, who represented the coal-miners’ organization. He was a very practical, forceful man, — but he was uneducated, and therefore, incapable of preparing a well-constructed, political speech. He knew my father, in a political way, and often came to see him at our house. On one of these occasions, father was so impressed by Dobbs’ excellent memory, that he decided that he would make a mighty good spell-binder.

“So my father prepared a speech, which Joe was to commit to memory, and then deliver it before working-men’s organizations, in various parts of the country. Joe made good in memorizing, perfectly, the discourse, which father had written for him. He needed no instruction in the art of delivering his speech, for he was, as they say, a natural born talker,—with a smooth, suave, ‘gift of gab’.

“To make a long story short, Joe made a big hit, and he was sent for to make speeches all over the country. He had a natural conceit, — the conceit of an ignorant man, of course,—and a buoyancy of spirits, which carried him through, wherever he went. In fact, the applause of the crowds and the adulation of the multitudes, spoiled him, so

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that he was never good for anything, after that campaign was over. It happened that on the night before election, he was given a place on the program, where William McKinley, himself, spoke.

“This was too much for Joe, he nearly blew up and busted. He sent a Rush Telegram to my father. It read:

“ ‘ME AND WILLIAM MCKINLEY SPEAKS HERE TONIGHT. JOE.’ ”

“That was funny. I trust that after having heard this story, I shall take warning and not lose my head over the generous applause which I received in this Campaign; for I would not want such a pleasant and satisfactory experience to result in wrecking my life for the future,” said Maxine, laughingly.

“Well, to change the subject, what about the Texan,—my soldier rival?” Richard inquired, good-naturedly.

“Has he lost any of his laurels, or have I lost mine?”

“Neither of you has ever lost anything, in my estimation,” answered Maxine, very frankly.

“You diplomat! You politician! And yet, I believe in you so implicitly, that I always think your praise sincere.

“But seriously, what I want to know now, most, is whether young Strong still holds his place as my rival,” insistently remarked Richard.

“Richard, you know that my interest in you was born first, of our compatibility of temperaments; and I have always believed that if you had been a single man when I met you, that nothing in the universe could have kept us apart, because we were drawn together, not only by our comradeship of ideals, — but by an intensity of mutual attraction, which I believe few people ever experience.

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“In fact, I think that very few natures have so much capacity for a true, loyally sustained, permanent affection.

“If the Fates had decreed to us an honorable right to marriage, there never would have been any other man in my life, — after I met you.

“But you know of the doubts, which I first expressed, when you suggested forcing circumstances. These doubts still survive and I can not clear my mind of them,” she protested.

“Then, do you mean to say that you will, forever, permit the conventionalities of the world to deprive us of our greatest happiness, — a happiness to which every man and woman are entitled?”

“I know you are big enough and magnanimous enough to understand me, when I tell you, Richard, that I sometimes believe, it is best for me not to marry at all.

“Seemingly strange tricks of the Fates have always prevented me from marrying. There has always been some insurmountable barrier, which has loomed up in everyone of my romances; — and put the possibility of an ethical and appropriate marriage, far into the back-ground.

“I am beginning to be thankful that I have cultivated my natural talents, to such a degree that I can live and lead a useful, single life; — and even though this is a poor compromise, — which I admit it to be, — I am growing to rely, more and more, for my individual happiness on the resources, both mental and spiritual, which I can find within myself.”

“I have never been able to discover any Punch in a game of solitaire,” ejaculated Richard.

“It is a game which lacks ‘kick’, in every sense of the word,” he continued.

“I quite agree with you,” responded Maxine, “but what

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is one to do? I would rather make a compromise with myself, — and live with myself, on peaceable and conscientious terms, than to repudiate the dominating Voice of the Inner Woman, which tells me that I must not try to erect a home of happiness on the shallow foundation of another woman's unhappiness. Of the two compromises, I prefer to accept the former, — and the lesser, — because, at the very best, there must be some compromise in every life; otherwise, we should be perfectly satisfied, and there would be nothing to test the metal of character. I esteem it my duty to make the best of a difficult and trying situation," she concluded.

"I have always believed that a Lover, who is worthy of being loved, will sacrifice, for the object of his or her affections, all comfort, and life itself, if necessary," quickly answered Richard.

"Yes, comfort and life if necessary, but not ideals and principles. I know that the still, small voice of conscience says to me, clearly, audibly, and distinctly: 'You may compromise with yourself, without trespassing upon the rights of others, — but that form of compromise is not dangerous. It has to do only with the temporary, transitory affairs of life; but when you compromise by sacrificing others, and their rights, for your own pleasure, — you compromise your Inner Self, — your Divine Heritage of Immortality, — your very Soul'," she added, "and that, I can not do."

"Yes, I know," said Richard, apparently yielding more to Maxine's point of view. "We should never urge another to violate conscience. No one should attempt to fix a standard for someone else to live by," he said, thoughtfully.

"I have thought, sometimes," Maxine went on, "that you and I should derive our greatest satisfaction from our

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mutual gratitude for the rich enfoldment, which has come to each of us, through our association.

“Sometimes we achieve more, through the strength of character, which comes to us through the relinquishment of desire, than we ever achieve through the gratification of desire. If we can not realize our ideals, we can, at least, idealize our reals.

“You know, Richard, that I have long thought you capable of filling a greater place of usefulness in the world than you have ever yet done.”

“Yes, I know, and I appreciate your long-cherished aspirations for me, — and now that you speak of it, — I am reminded that Hargreaves is quite insistent that I shall become a candidate for the United States Senate from this State, when the next Senatorial election occurs.

“He will start very soon to serve his third term in Congress, and he looks forward, eventually, to an appointment to one of the best Ambassadorships, as he wants to culminate his career by officially serving the country in a foreign capital. He is anxious to keep the political machinery of his own State connected up with his affairs. He has in mind one of his friends, whom he wants to have succeed him in Congress, and to make his personal organization more complete, he desires that I shall be elected to the United States Senate.

“But I have kept my ambition in the back-ground, because I have hoped that you would consent to permit me to put my affairs in such order, that you and I could lead our own lives.

“I am getting older, although you seem to remain perpetually young. I have felt that I wanted to devote the

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remaining years of my life, in such a way as to make you happy.

“I have believed that we would both be justified in insistently extracting from an ironical Fate, the happiness long denied to us, and long due to us.

“In other words, my ambition to serve in high office, has been supplanted by my great desire to be with you always, and I, of course, realize that I can not consistently, — with any sense of delicacy or propriety, seek the suffrages of the people, if the record of any unpleasant, domestic episode is to take root in their memories. Besides I would rather have your love than to occupy the highest office in the world —”

“Richard, it is all wrong that you should deny yourself a brilliant, useful career of national importance. If you do so, I shall be filled with regrets. I can not abide such a thought.

“Your place is in the United States Senate,— where the influence of your work and ideals shall be far-reaching. There, you could put into practice and operation, through your numerous points of contact, many of the principles and good works of which we have so often talked. That would be a vicarious fulfilment of all our hopes and wishes and plans.

“Merely because a romance, — a real heart love, — can not be consummated by marriage, is no reason for denying to it the right to bear the fruits of a rich influence. To do so, would be to destroy many forces for good, merely for the reason that they could not express themselves through conventional channels.

“Now, do promise me that you will go ahead with a political career,” insisted Maxine.

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“Yes, I will consider it,—merely because it means the carrying out of your wishes, — and besides, it will give me, — if I am successful, — an opportunity to indulge myself in some of my pet hobbies, — a privilege which is very dear to a man, as he grows older.”

“To which of your hobbies would you devote yourself first?” queried Maxine.

“Well, first of all, I would interest myself, if I followed my own inclinations, — in the real needs of my constituents. I would want them to feel the real touch of my personality. Knowing that I had a sympathetic point of contact well established, I would look to the larger things in matters of public policy.

“Disarmament is now a subject which occupies much public attention. I would not give my influence to National Disarmament, unless we could have the most positive assurances, as a Nation, that all nations, — and not groups, or cliques of nations, — consented to it in good faith; and I should want to know, also, that their propositions, made in good faith, were to be well-substantiated by their national efforts.

“When everybody in the world is loaded, somebody explodes. When nobody is loaded, nobody explodes. When part of the world is loaded, and part of it is unloaded,—those who are loaded are bound to explode upon the unloaded.

“Of course, so long as any nation in the world is permitted to maintain a policy of aggression, and spirit of conquest, the same diplomatic privilege can not be denied to other nations, — although the United States will, of course, never adopt a policy of conquest or imperialism.

“For my part, I want to see the United States establish

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a strong organization of institutions and personnel, which shall make commerce and industry effective in foreign trade competition. I want to see an organization of political administration, by first organizing public opinion behind it.

“We should build up a field of trade promotion and trade information in reference to our foreign trade. We should modify our system of domestic, economic control, so that it will permit American business to thrive at home and prosper abroad. I would not have the Government take over anything, which private industry is able to handle. I believe that the Government should give guarantees to our problems of communication and transportation, such as our railroads, steamship companies, telegraph and cable companies, and to all carriers, both by rail and water, which transport the mails.

“Not only do I want to see the United States become the foremost nation in the control of world trade, but I want to see it become the leading nation in magnanimous practice, — which shall mean that it shall stand always for International Fair-Play.

“You know that the British Empire maintains a very efficient index to the personnel of the country and its dominions. They go over their Empire with a fine tooth comb, and take the very best brains in it, for the Diplomatic and Consular Service. They comb the Empire the second time, and they take the next best brains for the British Navy, which constitutes their second great line of defense. They canvass the Empire the third time, and draft the third best brains into the British Army, or make school-teachers of them.

“I should like to see established a National School of Diplomacy in Washington, D. C. where a selected body of

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students, chosen from the keenest young minds in the country, after competitive tests, should receive instruction in Diplomatic Science, and the tactics, strategy and fine points of World Policies, and International Intercourse.

“For a long time, competitive diplomacy, between and among nations, will continue to regulate world affairs. This competition will become keener, as time goes on. There will be cooperation, too; but the fundamentals of national policy, in all countries, will be determined by competition.

“We shall need to train and organize, a corps of diplomats, who shall be instructed by the leading statesmen of our own country; and by American academic men, who have specialized in various branches of History and Economics. Those who have been previously engaged in our Diplomatic and Consular Service, should be called upon, to give the younger cadets of diplomacy the benefit of their experience.

“The race problem of the world is becoming more complex. When we stop to consider that the white races constitute only a little more than two-fifths of the people of the world, — that is a serious fact with which we must reckon. Foremost in our minds must be the continuity and perpetuation of Our Republic, — the United States, and secondly, we must always do our part to help the white race to maintain world domination. There must be unity, concord and organization of purpose by all the white peoples of the world. We must never lose sight of that fact.

“I have sometimes thought that I would leave a considerable part of my fortune to establish such a school as I have just described; and that I would make provision to have a School of Diplomacy, conducted according to the ideals of the foremost American statesman, — by a committee of contemporary statesmen and a faculty to be designated,

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from time to time, by the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the United States Senate."

"Your ideas are simply splendid," said Maxine, enthusiastically.

"Now, wouldn't it be absurd for a man of your brilliant mind and constructive capacity, to forego the privileges and honors, which could only come to him, through an official career,—merely because he was in love with a woman, marriage with whom would mean, probably, a temporary, political ostracism, and possibly, an ultimate retirement to a partially, secluded life?"

"Well, I have told you time and again, Maxine, exactly what I prefer. There is no misunderstanding about that. It is now entirely up to you, as to the course which we shall adopt in the future.

"How long do you expect to be at the Hargreaves? I suppose that Loyola will want to keep you with her until they are ready to go back to Washington," commented Richard.

"Yes, I am going to remain until after Thanksgiving. I think that we shall all start East the day after. I am so glad that I brought Mary Ann with me. My campaign experiences were very interesting to her, and it was nice to have her along to look after me.

"O, by the way, how is Argus? These must be wonderful days for him, visiting you, back in his old home, once more. Are you going to let him go back with us?" she queried.

"Well, I don't know about that. Eleanor seems to have taken an entirely different attitude toward having him at

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home. Only yesterday, she said that there was no use of sending him back East. Of course, she never knew where he was. She has had the impression all along that he was in the hands of an experienced care-taker, — and, of course, he has been. I certainly would not like to take him away from you and Mary Ann. You have both become so attached to him,” said Richard.

“Well, of course, he is your dog,” replied Maxine, “and while we do not like to give him up, at the same time, you were his first love, and to you, he owes his highest loyalty and affection, — a fact, which I believe, in his very exacting code of dog-ethics, he recognizes.”

“Well, we’ll see about it later on,” answered Richard.

They had just finished luncheon at the Olympic Club. Richard was such an active member of the political committee, which had been appointed to look after Maxine’s entertainment, that he could, with propriety, entertain her in public, — at least, in the best established club in town. He took Maxine back to the Hargreaves’ home in his high-powered, new coupé.

When she arrived in her room, she found a letter from Henry. It read:

Strongsville, Texas.

November 16, 1920.

Dear Maxine:

I am home once more, and at present, I am taking a little recreation on our peanut ranch.

Mother had grown impatient, during my long absence.

I owe to her, and my dead father, and to you,

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all that I am. I felt that I should not longer neglect her.

I shall return to New York the first week in December, so that will bring me back about the time of your arrival there. I am rejoicing that you have decided to return so soon.

Yes, we shall talk it all over then. In the heat and excitement of the campaign, I had thought that the necessity for such continuous, hard work, would serve to alleviate the loneliness which I felt, after you left the city. But I was lonelier than I have ever been before, in my life, — and you say that you have missed me, more than ever. That is a good sign, in view of the fact, that you have, also, been strenuously occupied on a political mission.

Now, I hope you will play awhile, and devote yourself to recreative pursuits.

At the conclusion of my last month's work, I realized that I must let down for awhile. I have done so. I am giving myself over to all the pleasures of home.

The best way to enjoy a vacation, is to vacate. That I am doing, — greeting old neighbors and friends, teasing my sweet, little sister, who, you remember, was graduated at the University of Texas last June. I call on my brother Frederic, every day at his office in town.

He looks upon me as a real cosmopolite, because he has spent most of his life in this part of the country, never having been East of Chicago. I get a real "kick" out of telling him about my observations and experiences. For instance, he was amazed,

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when I told him that both of the big political parties distributed different sets of literature to the capitalists and labor organizations, throughout the country. What was molasses for one would have been vinegar for the other, and vice versa, — so the political, publicity bureaus sent to each group of men such material as they believed would be molasses to them. One kind of literature was prepared for capitalists and another for laborers. Both booklets in our office were written by the same man.

I learned, through one of my reporters, just before I left New York that the bootleggers were paying financial tribute to the Dry Squad, in order to insure full protection to their enterprise.

I went to call on some of the girls here, who have been spending the past summer in Europe. They show their provinciality by the numerous affectations, which they have taken on, — by the way they shake hands, by their speech, and manners. They belong to a crowd, who have more money than good sense. The Paris clothes, which they brought home with them, are an abomination. They conceal very little of the form or figure. In fact, one of the girls, whose gown had no back, told me afterwards, that she had made a mistake and put it on hind side before.

I am finding a great deal of time to play with my dog, Ginger. He is the best canine creature, which abides upon the earth. He is a humanitarian dog, too, and by the way, he is just plain dog, no special brand. Only the other day, he performed

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what I consider to have been one of his most heroic feats.

Our nearest neighbor has just had a dog sent to him from Tennessee. The little fellow has been terribly home-sick. He has refused to eat, and was just mourning his life away, when Ginger's sympathies began to be enlisted with his forlorn, newly-arrived neighbor.

Last night, Ginger took one of his own bones, which he had carefully hidden in the back-yard; placed it in his mouth,—went over to the back door-step, where sat his unfortunate friend, the cocker spaniel, and dropped the tempting, osseous morsel in front of Snipper's mouth.

I consider that to have been real, genuine hospitality in its most unalloyed form.

Very recently, one of our neighbors was about to drown two kittens. He had taken one of the feline infants to a large kettle of water nearby. Ginger had observed him with eager interest,—then suddenly, he sprang from his haunches to his feet and ran, at break-neck speed across the yard toward the neighbor's house. Once there, he grabbed the surviving kitten by the nape of the neck and started for our back door, where he just begged Aunt Sarah, our cook, to help him with his rescue party. So much for Ginger's Reconstruction Record.

You remember once, when we were discussing the slain heroes of the battlefield, that I expressed the opinion, that I believed that animals, as well as persons, had souls. Ginger's conduct confirms me in that opinion. I also remember of saying, either then

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or at some other time, when I was talking with you, that I did not believe that any person, or any living creature, can ever die, — that is, that the soul never loses its identity, and is immortal.

The more I see of the good works of the Creator, the more do I believe that all life is perpetual. I do not believe that the human soul ever loses consciousness. We are all one with the Infinite; the more we love, the more Infinite do we become, until we reach Divinity itself.

Just now, I feel an Infinite expansion of all that is best in me, and wish that I might reach out and absorb you, as the other seven-eighths of my Divinity, and the eight-eighths of my Affinity.

I was so constantly at my desk, for the last few months, in my New York office, that many times, at the end of the day, my left side ached. You may remember, that I once told you that my last wound, inflicted in the Argonne, was close to the abdomen, considerably below the left lung. This has bothered me a little, of late; but of course, I know that this is all due to weariness and temporary exhaustion. My mother wants me to go in to see my old friend, Doctor Scott, about it; so just to please her, I am going this afternoon.

I will write you again, within the next two or three days, and I will see you in New York, about the first of December. Let me know exactly when you are to leave, and I will plan to meet you at the train, when you arrive in town.

With my most devoted wishes for your continual happiness, and my earnest prayers for the

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highest good fortune which can possibly come to
you, I am,

Always, Dearest Maxine

Your Faithful Henry.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Vision

“YES,” Maxine mused, after she had read Henry’s letter, “even his dog is like himself, — with a heart that would feed the world and succor humanity, with its sustenance and compassion.

“Too bad, that the poor boy is so tired. Well, his mother will take good care of him, and he will come back to New York, completely rested, and ready to tackle all the big problems of a great editorial office. I’m sure that trouble with his side is only the result of over-taxing himself, and I’m so glad that he can have this rest.

“The more I reflect, the more perplexing does my dilemma become. I do not know whether it would be conducive to Henry’s highest interests, if I were to marry him. That seven years’ seniority, I fear, would make our marriage unsuitable and impractical, so far as his permanent happiness would be concerned. I hope that I can continue to inspire him, with a full appreciation of his talents and future possibilities, whether or not I marry him.

“I want to see both Henry and Richard on the highest pinnacles of achievement. I know that I owe it to both men, to give them all the inspiration, which I can, which will help them to compete successfully with other ambitious, combative men, in the struggles and adventures, and contests, incidental to public work.

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“Inevitably, Richard will reach the climax of his career, many years in advance of Henry. Both are fine, capable men, who need only a strong incentive to bring out their noblest efforts.

“Henry, though young and enthusiastic, with plenty of optimism, has no more determination and ‘peptomism’ than Richard, who has retained all his strongest attributes of personality and character. Physically and mentally, he has kept his pristine vigor. They are both capable of brilliant achievements, and I count it a distinction that they honor me, by paying tribute to me, for the help which they say, I have given them.”

Maxine was alone, in deep meditation, trying to solve the problem of adjusting her life, in such a way that she could continue to exert an inspirational influence over both Henry and Richard, until they would be able to triumph in their careers. Richard’s ultimate success would come within a few short years. Henry’s gradual climb, toward the climax of his aspirations, would, no doubt, cover most of the period of Maxine’s natural life time. Maxine wanted, above all, to do the right thing; never had she violated the dictations of her sub-conscious self.

She was thinking of the best way, by which she could meet, graciously and successfully, the entire situation. This was her first thought when she awoke in the morning, and her last before she slumbered at night.

She had received Henry’s last letter on Friday morning. She had answered it the following day. She was looking forward keenly to the arrival of his next letter on Monday or Tuesday of the coming week. Monday and Tuesday came but there were no letters from Henry.

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“There must have been a delay in the mails,” she said to Mary Ann. “Surely his letter will arrive Wednesday.”

Maxine hurried home from the Bon Ton Club, where Loyola Hargreaves had given a luncheon for her; only to be disappointed again, when she looked at her mail.

About four o'clock Wednesday afternoon, Mrs. Hargreaves' parlor-maid, Maria, brought her a telegram.

Maxine opened it, rather nervously. It read:

HENRY DIED THIS MORNING. LYMPHATIC POISONING.

FREDERIC STRONG.

Maxine sank back in her chair, — pale, motionless and stunned.

“Call Mrs. Hargreaves and Mary Ann,” she said to Maria, — in a low, faint tone of voice.

They came, and did all in their power to soothe Maxine's troubled heart and grieved soul. For many days, one of them was always by her side.

The shock proved to be the greatest in Maxine's whole life. Even when her parents had died, she had been better prepared for the loss. Now, she was utterly prostrated. She experienced an entire collapse; it was days before she rallied sufficiently to be able to go downstairs.

Henry, the idol of her dreams! The fulfillment of her ideal of young manhood had gone! Henry, — her friend! Her soldier-boy! He was no more. No, it could not be!

She could hear him saying, as he had said to her just before he left Paris for America:

“In fact, I do not believe that anything, or anybody, ever dies; but I do believe that the spirits of those, who have

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gone on, will always help us to fight our battles, and meet our Calvaries, if we will only let them.

“I believe that they are as close to us, in point of proximity, as the flowers; and that we may breathe their very presence, if we but will.

“I believe that they talk to us, in our thoughts, and express themselves, in our actions. No one is dead. No, that can not be.”

Over and over again, Maxine soliloquized, concerning these things which Henry had said.

And his faith had been with him to the end; for in his very last letter, he had expressed it again. Maxine read and re-read these lines:

“I do not believe that the human soul ever loses consciousness. We are all one with the Infinite; the more we love, the more Infinite do we become, until we reach Divinity itself.”

In her reveries, something always seemed to say to her:

“Firm in the Faith he fell, and unafraid.”

Loyola Hargreaves now proved, to a greater degree than ever, her loyalty to, and her love for Maxine.

“You know, Loyola,” said Maxine, “you are so different from all my other friends. I always feel so natural whenever I am with you. Your sympathy is so genuine in the hour of grief and tragedy. You are always there, whenever I need you.

“You remember Frances Hildreth at boarding-school; — well, you know, she always professed to think so much of me, — but as the years have gone by, she has always seemed to want to impress me with the fact that her interests have multiplied to such an extent, as a consequence of the large fortune acquired by her husband in recent years, that she has little

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time, which she can devote to her old friends. She never fails to give me the impression that she still thinks as much of me as ever, — but at the same time, she informs me that her inevitable absorption in her present activities prevents her from continuing our old-time association.

“Only this morning, I received a letter from her;— you know she married Irving Bradshaw, a Wall Street man.

“Well, in this letter, she tells me that they are now at Atlantic City, at the Marlborough-Blenheim; that she has been obliged to go there because her nerves are just frazzled out, as the result of her numerous social activities. She says that she has two French maids, and concludes her letter by condoling with me, because she thinks that I must find life, in this Western country, rather uninteresting; ‘so far away from the center of things,’ she remarks, and then adds: ‘I can not quite understand how a girl of your traditions could undertake to meet the vulgar herd, which you must have contacted in your public meetings in the Presidential Campaign.’

“She concludes by describing further, the luxury by which she is surrounded, as much as to say: Of course, every one can not afford to have nervous prostration in Atlantic City, you know, — especially with the service of two French maids.

“Sometimes, I really become so disgusted with Frances’ affectation, that I think I can no longer continue to keep up our long-established friendship.

“I merely relate this incident to you, Loyola, because I want to illustrate, by contrast, your sincerity and heart-interest, as compared with her assumed, affected, patronizing profession of friendship for me.

“My heart is now full of gratitude for your devotion,

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during this trying, heart-rending period in my life. I feel that you are neglecting your own interests to look after me, — especially, since you have postponed going back to Washington; because that will make it necessary for Worthington to go alone, and he depends upon you so much.

“I certainly must pull myself together, and bring myself out of this heart-sorrow. I feel so selfish in imposing my grief upon you, as I have been doing.”

“Why, Maxine!” exclaimed Mrs. Hargreaves. “I consider it a privilege to have you in my home, and to be able to be of some service to you.

“Indeed, I would have been very much worried, if you had been anywhere else in the world, when this grief overtook you. Mary Ann is almost as overcome by your situation, as you are yourself. She feels so deeply everything which touches, or affects you. I want you to make yourself perfectly comfortable, and feel entirely at ease, — just as you would do in your own home, and I want you to stay here until you feel like yourself again.

“Now, there,— be good to yourself, and try to make yourself as contented as possible. In that way, you will make me happy,” said Loyola, as she patted Maxine’s cheek. “Bless her heart! It’s just a shame that you had to have such a trying experience, but I know that your splendid philosophy of life is going to stand by you, and that your spiritual vision will help you to see that everything is for the best.”

While Loyola and Maxine were having this chat, Maria brought in afternoon tea; and the two friends, who had met many years before in the class-room of the Miss Maxwells’ School, supped their tea and talked to each other of the long ago.

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“Let me fill your cup again. It will be a long time before dinner,” said Loyola.

“Well, if you will dilute it with plenty of hot water; you know I must save my nerves right now.”

Just at this instant, Loyola and Maxine were interrupted by Winfield Hargreaves, four years of age, the youngest of the Hargreaves’ four children. He came rushing into the room exclaiming, “Is it time for me to start to meet my father?”

“No, not yet,” answered his mother. “Not for half an hour.”

As Mrs. Hargreaves turned to speak to her young son, she observed that his kilt skirt, which he had worn when he left the house was missing. “Why, Laddie Hargreaves,” she exclaimed. “What have you done with your Scotch plaid skirt?”

Laddie began to wiggle, and offered the explanation that Donald Reames, who lived next door, and who had recently donned trousers, had been making fun of him.

“He called me a baby, a big baby, and he said that he did not want to play with me, unless I would wear trousers like big men.”

“Well, what did you do with your skirt?” queried Laddie’s mother.

“I dunno. Donald took it. I don’t know where he put it.”

A thorough search revealed, that Laddie’s kilt skirt was buried beneath a pile of stones, near the flower-beds, the two youngsters having evidently concluded, that this was the only safe and sure way to plan matters, so that Laddie, in future, would not be embarrassed by skirts, which Donald said made him look like a “sissy.”

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After Laddie went to meet his father, little Patricia Hargreaves, who was two years older than her brother, came into the room.

“Is Lammie here?” she inquired, in a low, sweet, childish voice.

“Not yet,” her mother said. “Laddie has just gone to meet him.”

The Worthington-Hargreaves’ home had been, from the first, built on a very secure foundation of loyalty, understanding and love. It radiated an atmosphere, which was as sweet and refreshing, as the fragrance of summer flowers, and as exhilarating as a sudden breeze of ozone on a sultry day.

There was a spirit of naturalness in the Hargreaves family, which made life a joy, not only to the Hargreaves themselves, but to those who had the privilege of sharing their generous hospitality.

Loyola Hargreaves administered the affairs of her household in a very quiet manner. She generally said little, but she used her brains much. She understood Humphrey Hargreaves, and he understood her.

In his political life, he found that many of his old-time women friends could be very useful to him. Loyola had always encouraged him in a policy of continuing all of his old friendships. In fact, she always saw to it at Christmas time, that each of the girls and women, who had helped to promote her husband’s interests, received a book, or a box of candy, or some other suitable remembrance. Loyola was so tolerant and diplomatic, in the management of her husband, that he never violated her confidence.

As soon as Maxine was ready to receive him, Richard came to call on her in the Hargreaves’ home. She told him frankly the cause of her illness. He listened sympathetically.

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He had too big a nature not to comprehend the situation in its fullness. He was genuinely sorry for Maxine. He saw, — he could not escape knowing, that Maxine's soul had been pierced to the very marrow. He was deeply grieved that she must undergo this tragic experience.

For many weeks, Maxine was bewildered, — perplexed, confused and troubled. Where was her place now? Should she, in her loneliness, seek refuge and shelter in Richard Radcliffe's big soul? Should she, at last, after all her resistance to the compromising temptation which confronted her, acquiesce to Richard's plans for putting his affairs in order, so that she could become his wife? Or should she, merely as his dear friend, urge him and inspire him to go on with his public career, giving to him such assistance as her abilities would warrant, in the formation of plans for his election to public office?

Which would prove to be the best for her generous, unselfish and magnanimous friend, who had proven so recently, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that he so perfectly understood her and loved her, — even though she had experienced such real heart-grief, because of the passing to another life, of the man whom Richard had looked upon as his rival?

Richard was leaving the matter entirely with Maxine now, with no forced attempt to influence or control her decision.

She, herself, was trusting to the Great Giver of All Good, to help her to make an all-wise determination. She was praying, continually, for some Divine influence or inspiration, to enter her consciousness, which would enable her to make the decision which would be best for Richard, for Eleanor, and for herself.

As she fell asleep one evening, after her thoughts had

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been concentrated on the grave problem before her, — she saw, in her dream, the form of a young man. As he approached Maxine, in this Land of Dreams, she recognized him. It was Henry. He spoke to her, saying:

“You have grieved too much for me. You have shed too many tears. In Paradise, we know not tears. There is nothing about this thing called death, which we should fear. It is only the opening door to more abundant life.

“Do not think it was because I had neglected myself in any way, that I was called to that which seems to you a most untimely fate.

“No; my father, who has been in the Celestial world for many years, wanted to talk with me, face to face. He wanted me to work with him here, on a most important, spiritual mission, involving the welfare of all mankind.

“He did not mean to call me quite so soon; but Celestial voices are very powerful; powerful, but not loud or coarse. A mere whisper from them has the strength of ethereal penetration, which equals that of hundreds of earthly voices. The resonance of a Heavenly vocal sound has a million times the volume of a severe clap of thunder; and yet, it is sweet and musical. The sympathetic vibration is very strong, when anyone here speaks to one upon the earth, — especially, to one whom he loves. The vibration is intensified in proportion to the degree of love which exists between the two.

“A call from here must be subdued, or it will bring many of our loved ones to us too soon, — too suddenly, — with too little preparation. But anyone here can call a loved one on the earth at will. The wisdom of the Heavenly inhabitants is so superior to that of the inhabitants of the earth, that they exercise their power unselfishly, — only, when it is to accom-

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plish something, which shall help to carry out some part of the Divine plan.

“Now, Maxine, I know all that you are enduring in your mental distress, and anguish of soul. Do not be afraid. Hold to thy faith. Let the rod and staff of the Almighty comfort thee. All will be well. ‘Consider the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin, yet Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.’ Remember the Scriptural saying: ‘Even the very hairs of your head are numbered.’ ‘Not a sparrow falleth to the ground but that He knoweth.’ ‘If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’ ‘I will not leave you desolate; I will come unto you.’

“I have seen many of my Buddies and Pals, who fell in the war. They were all called by a Celestial Patriarch, whose voice is more powerful than the sound of the heaviest cannon. But they were not called, until they were needed here to help from this side; to shorten the duration of the terrible conflict. They inspired from here their old-time fighting comrades. They are all happy here, and they help their grieved ones on earth to bear their burdens, and finally, to eliminate them.

“Never question, Maxine, the Wisdom of the All-Powerful. You know that the mechanism of a complicated instrument, or intricate invention, is beyond the power of many earthly people to comprehend. Such machines are, likewise, unintelligible in their construction to the brightest of children. You know we should not expect a child to understand the mechanical parts of a telephone, or telegraph instrument; and so, by comparison, the Plan of the Universe is just as incomprehensible to older people. Let thy heart be filled with trust.

“I must go now. I will not come to you again, or make

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myself manifest to you, unless you summon me, voluntarily, by a Soul-Call.'"

When Maxine awoke from her slumbers, she was almost frightened, for a moment. She felt that she had contacted another world. She seemed to detect, as she awoke, the fragrance of flowers, — not of the earth, — but spiritual flowers, the perfume of which was intoxicatingly enchanting.

While she reflected upon her dream, a calm, soothing, repose of soul seemed to come over her, and take possession of her spirits. From this time, her mental attitude became more cheerful. She was more inclined to resume her interest in every day events.

That very day, she accepted an invitation to have luncheon with Richard, at the Olympic Club. He had been so tender, patient and considerate, during her most grief-stricken days, that she realized now, that it was her duty, whenever she was in his presence, to reflect only cheerfulness.

Under the stimulation of his ready wit, keen humor, and brilliant conversation, — which was always in happy and interesting vein, Maxine really enjoyed herself once more.

Several days after this, she took a long drive with Richard on the Olympic Highway, and once more, he broached the subject of her final decision, in regard to a permanent union between them. Maxine was still in a perplexed state of mind. If she were to say the words, which would influence Richard to take the necessary steps, to make himself a free man, then, she feared that he must needs forego his public career. This would be depriving him of the opportunity to serve in the place in the world, where he could exercise his greatest usefulness. From day to day, it became increasingly difficult for her to formulate a practical, feasible plan, which would conform to her ethical standards. Truly, she was sorely tried.

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“Richard,” she said, in her usual, sweet voice, “you know that I want to do whatever is best for you. I am not yet sure, as to what I really ought to do. I have thought of it, night and day. I have been perplexed beyond measure; — but it has come over me, of late, that if we only trust to the Great Doer of All Good Deeds, we shall both be guided by the unvarying Law of Right and Justice, which shall, eventually, clarify our vision, and lead us to peace of mind, and our greatest happiness. We can only rest matters there.”

Richard was mildly acquiescent to this proposed state of affairs.

“Maxine,” he said, “whether or not I can ever claim you as my wife, rests with you; but, however matters may terminate, you have proven yourself, at all times, my highest ideal, — my greatest joy in life. You have preserved my faith in all that is Good and True and Real.

“Whatever my fate, I want you to know, that since we have known each other, you have made your spirit manifest in every good work, which I have accomplished.

“Henceforth, too, every voluntary action, which I perform, shall be blessed with the impetus of your unselfish spirit, and with the power of your great goodness; for, in talking with you, and knowing you, I feel that I have known and talked with angels.”

That afternoon, after Richard took her back to the Hargreaves' home, she felt so much fatigued, from her day's exertion, that she decided that she would go to her room to indulge herself in a little rest before dinner.

As she reposed herself in her soft, blue, Cashmere tea-gown, on the inviting pillows, and the sun came streaming through the windows, she felt the enticing, enchanting touches

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of an approaching, peaceful sleep. She thought of her dream, in which Henry had come to her.

“I would like to dream of him once more. His message was so soothing and comforting.” Then she remembered that he had said that he would not come to her again, in her slumbers, unless she summoned him by a Soul-Call. As she yielded her consciousness to the seductive influences of sleep, her last thought was of Henry.

Maxine Marling, where are you in your dreams? Do you hear the strains of Celestial music on Heavenly harps, whose strings are one thousand times finer than those of any musical instruments on the earth?

Who are those angels, dressed in shimmering gowns? They seem to represent Hope and Purity and Justice and Love. Their motions are like the waves of ether, — a complication of aerial movements. Their dance is an ingenious, fantastical invention, in which every motion is in perfect rhythm and concord, with the measured, leaping, tripping, Divine music. As they wind their graceful, lithe, pliant, Heavenly figures, first one way, and then the other, the Celestial Light illumines their faces with a transcendent glow, and they smile upon the earth, as a benediction.

At the climax of their brilliant, dazzling appearance, a choir of youthful voices joins them, in their final dance. The volume of their voices is so powerful that it would penetrate to the earth, itself, if it were not for the material cloud of selfishness and sensuality, the clamorous noises and tumultuous confusion, which reign over all earthly places.

There is a group of merry, happy children, with laughing faces. They are little cherubs, who fly through the air with rapid graceful motions and high velocity. They welcome newly-arrived spirits, as they enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

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They are descending in their flight. One of them an angelic, little girl, taps Henry Strong on the shoulder, and summons him to go with her to welcome a beautiful friend of his, who has just come into the Heavenly sphere. Henry turns and follows the child, exclaiming, as he does so:

“And a little child shall lead them.”

When Mary Ann went to call Maxine to dinner, she found her in a deep, still, silent slumber, from which she never awoke.

The announcement of her passing, was telephoned by Maria, to the Radcliffe residence in Mount Olympic. Eleanor went into the library to tell Richard that Maxine Marling had just died.

Argus, who was sitting by the fire-place, near his master's side, jumped up and put his head, affectionately, in Richard's lap. His acutely developed canine intuition told him, unmistakably, that his master was in trouble, and he wanted to be the first to pour out the sympathy of his strong, mighty heart.

For days, Richard Radcliffe went about with bowed head, — a sad, solemn, figure, occupied in deep retrospection.

A few days after Maxine's remains had been sent, in charge of Mary Ann, back to Cortland, New York, Richard was absorbed in reverential reverie, in front of the fire-place again.

Eleanor pushed back the portieres and stepped softly and quietly into the room. She went to her husband's side, and said:

“Richard, you have not thought that I knew. I did. I understand. I realize more than I ever have before. I know all that you are suffering. I know that I have been, at times,

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cold and unresponsive, when you needed close, sympathetic companionship.

“I know that our differences, are more temperamental and psychological than they are differences of the heart.

“I know that the one whom you have lost had that quick powerful, spontaneous understanding, which made you one with her. I know that she had a tolerance, which all women should have.

“I am going to try from now on, as best I can, to take her place, — to be to you that which I have never been before, — a tolerant spirit, — less self-centered than in the past.

“I am going to try to make up to you for all the years, when I was trying to be a good, dutiful wife, but did not know how.”

“Eleanor,” said Richard, “you have restored to me that beautiful ideal of yourself, which I cherished so sacredly, eighteen years ago, on that eventful, June day, when you became my loving, trustful bride. I am more grateful than you know. There are so many lessons, which we must all learn. If we would all have life, and have it more abundantly, we must get more Life through Love.”

Then he reached forward his right hand, in which he pressed, very closely, that of Eleanor. As they looked into each other's eyes, they could read only serenity and peace and sweetness and Divinity.

During the next United States Senatorial contest, Richard Radcliffe was elected to the United States Senate, by an overwhelming majority; and his friends all predicted for him a worthy and brilliant career.

* * * * *

Maxine left an estate, which aggregated about one hundred forty thousand dollars, — fifty thousand of which, she

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bequeathed to Mary Ann. The furnishings of her apartment, silver, jewelry, and other personal possessions, she divided among her relatives, and a few of her most intimate women friends. There were many keep-sakes and treasures bequeathed to Loyola Hargreaves and Mary Ann. The remainder of her estate, which comprised about ninety thousand dollars, she had bequeathed in her will, before she left New York, to be divided, equally among six beneficiaries,—her two brothers, Loyola Hargreaves, the Long Island Orthopaedic Hospital for Children, Henry and Richard.

She made the proviso that if any one of her beneficiaries should be deceased, at the time of her death, that his or her portion of the estate, should be divided, equally, among the other beneficiaries.

As soon as Loyola Hargreaves and Richard received their legacies, they made an agreement to found two very worthy memorials to Maxine. Loyola endowed a ward in the Children's Hospital of Mount Olympic, and Richard created a permanent fund for the use of the National Committee of Americanization, in a well-known patriotic organization.

Richard suggested that these lines from Owen Meredith should be inscribed on the door of the Maxine Marling Foundation Section of the Long Island Orthopaedic Hospital:

“No life can be pure in its purpose ;
And strong in its strife ;
And all life not become
Purer and stronger thereby ;
The army of martyrs who stand by the throne ;
And gaze into the face, which makes glorious their own
Know this surely at last :
Honest love, honest sorrow, honest hope for the day

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Honest work for the morrow;
Are these worth nothing more than the lives they make
weary
The hearts they have saddened; the souls they have made
dreary;
Hark! the seven-fold heavens to the voice of the spirit echo
He that overcometh shall all things inherit."

Richard Radcliffe's highest purpose was to carry out in his public career the splendid ideals which he and Maxine had cherished together. These ideals were in perfect harmony and accord with those of that great Chieftain of our present Reconstruction Period, our deceased President, whose reliance upon spiritual guidance made him the man that he was.

Just as the influence of the right woman was sent by an All Wise Providence into the life of Richard Radcliffe, so did God give the right help-meet and wife to our departed President.

The intellectual and spiritual attributes of Florence Kling Harding were important factors in the ultimate success and achievements of our distinguished, untimely stricken President.

Would that there were more such women whose highest purpose in life would be to contribute their most vital energies to the highest interests of their husbands. This influence would make for better daughters; better sons; better husbands; better homes; a better, more lasting and imperishable United States of America.

Warren G. Harding, our Pilot during two years and five months of progressive, political history brought forth our best standards of patriotism. He did not overlook our defects; neither did he magnify our excellencies.

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With clarified vision he analyzed the pulse and purpose and duty of the United States of America; as illustrated by one of his last public addresses, in which he said:

“I tell you, my countrymen, the world needs more of the Christ; the world needs the spirit of the Man of Nazareth. If we could bring into the relationships of humanity, among ourselves and among the nations of the earth, the brotherhood that was taught by the Christ we would have a restored world; we would have little or none of war, and we would have a new hope for humanity throughout the globe. There never was a greater lesson taught than that of the Golden Rule. If we could have that one faithfully observed, I would be willing to wipe out the remainder of the complaints.

“I should like to say further that if we are going to make of this America of ours all that the fathers sought, if we are going to make it true to the institutions for which they builded, we must continue to maintain religious liberty quite as well as civil and human liberty. As you remember, we builded on the foundation of civil liberty, and we capped that with the stone of human liberty and the third fundamental was religious liberty. The United States never can afford to deny religious freedom in this republic of ours.

“One more thought: I should like to have America a little more earnest and thoroughly committed in its religious devotion. We were more religious one hundred years ago, or even fifty years ago, than we are today. We have been getting too far away from the spiritual and too much absorbed in our material existence. It tends to make us a sordid people. The World War lifted us out of a rut. We found ourselves consecrated to the defense of the republic and fighting for our ideal of civilization, and we in America were put on a higher plane. But when the war was ended we started to drift back,

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thinking only of our selfish pursuits. I tell you, my countrymen, that we can never be the ideal republic unless we have great ideals to pursue and know something of the spiritual as well as the material life.

“That is one of the reasons I have been so zealous in the last few weeks in trying to have our country committed to something more of international helpfulness, so that it may be ready to play its part in the uplift of the world and in the movement to prevent in the future conflicts among the nations. I think that is an ideal worth pursuing. So long as we have something of that kind to think about and to strive for and to inspire us to go on, I know we are going to be a better people than we are when we occupy ourselves merely in digging, digging, digging for the dollar. There is something else in life than that, my countrymen, to think about. I do not underpraise the desirability of material good fortune. You must be able to subsist before you can begin to aspire. I should like to have material good fortune be the portion of every man and woman in America, but I do not choose material good fortune alone.

“One of the troubles with the world today is that it is torn with suspicion and hate. Europe is in a condition of feverish restlessness and is feeling the effects of the poison engendered by old-time passions, envies and rivalries, so that one people will not trust another. Would it not be better if somehow we could bring into the lives of those nations the spirit of Him whom the Father gave for the salvation of men, and exerted ourselves to spread brotherhood and new trust and new confidence among peoples, so that they may live in that fraternity which tends to solidify and cement together mankind? I should like more of fraternity amongst ourselves in the United States; I should like more of fraternity amongst

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the nations of the world, and if we apply the Golden Rule, about which none of you will dispute, for we all believe in it and admire it—and the only trouble is we do not practice it as we believe it—if we could bring the Golden Rule into every phase of American life, we would be the happiest people in the world.

“There would be no injustice to complain of, there would be no hate and no rivalry, there would be no industrial conflicts, but human beings would live among their fellows as they would like to be lived with. That would bring a state of blessedness to mankind.”

In front of the fireplace, in his apartment, in Washington Richard Radcliffe sat reading this spiritual Harding classic of patriotism. To him it was an emblem of the Paradise to come. When he had laid the paper aside, he closed his eyes in reverential attitude toward his heaven-called Chief; and, then he indulged in one of his habitual reveries. In these reflections Richard always looked upon the spirit of Maxine Marling as the link which connected himself with God.

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